

NEW!

STRENGTH TRAINING FOR YOUR *Mind & Body*

✦ Emotional reboot

✦ Get body-fit



SUPERFOODS OR **SUPERFADS?**

PLUS

CALORIE COUNTED

RECIPES

✦ EASY ✦ QUICK ✦ HEALTHY

COMBAT STRESS

Our experts
SHOW YOU HOW

Ultimate **FITNESS**

- ✦ Strength
- ✦ Pilates
- ✦ Yoga
- ✦ HIIT

LOVE YOURSELF *inside &* *OUT!*

MASTER SLEEP



Learn to **DECLUTTER YOUR MIND**

*The best ways to
give your brain a detox*



WAVE GOODBYE *to the Wobble!*

*How to use
weights effectively
to tone your arms*

**✦ GET THE MOST
FROM YOUR
GYM SESSION**

From the makers of
woman magazine

DISPLAY UNTIL 04/17/23 US \$13.99



a360media Specials



WORKOUT PLANS ✦ MINDFULNESS ✦ MASTER THE GYM ✦ MUST-HAVE EQUIPMENT

VISIT...

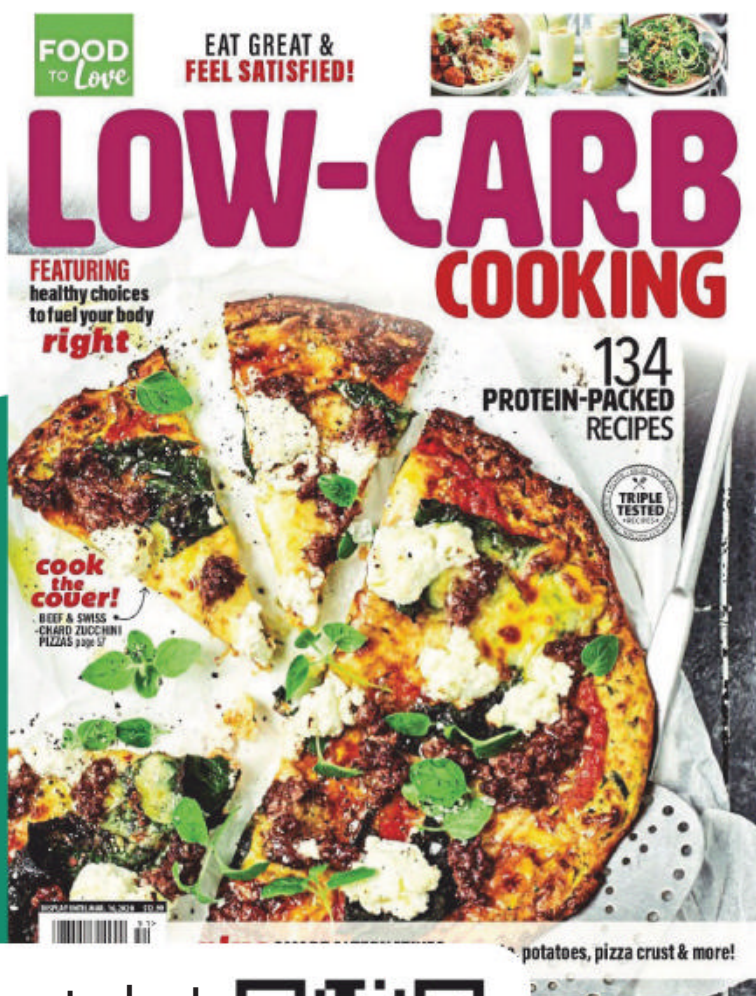
LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Live better with *Food to Love*

Give your well-being a boost the delicious way with these new titles from *Food to Love*!

Packed with easy dishes you'll want to make again and again, all recipes are triple-tested so you can be sure they'll cook up perfectly!

Find *Food to Love* titles wherever magazines are sold and online at www.magazineshop.us/foodtolove



Scan to shop!

Open your camera app, focus on this code, and tap when the url pops up!



STRENGTH TRAINING *FOR YOUR Mind & Body*

With our often fast and busy lifestyles, it's easy to sideline self-care, however neglecting your body and mind can leave you feeling fatigued, stressed and burned out. It's absolutely crucial that we take time out to look after ourselves, and the good news is that it's easier than you might think.

In this special bookazine, we'll walk you through the ways you can give your mind and body the care it deserves, as well as demonstrate ways you can get fitter, stronger and set you on the path of achieving your fullest potential. From mental exercises like mindfulness, meditation and yoga to workout plans, guides to strength training and the gym, and nutritional know-how, we will provide everything you need to begin your self-care journey.

The best part is that all of these exercises will easily fit in around your day-to-day schedule. So what are you waiting for? It's time to strengthen your body and mind! Let's get started.

Disclaimer

This publication is for information only and is not intended to substitute professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health or personal advice. Never disregard professional advice or delay seeking it.

Not all alternative therapies are suitable for everyone. Always consult your GP for guidance and before starting any new treatment. Always seek professional healthcare advice when experiencing any side effects.

In emergency call the emergency services and seek professional help immediately.

Readers rely on any information at their sole risk, and Strength Training For Your Mind & Body, and its publisher, Future Publishing Ltd, limit their liability to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Contents

♥ STRENGTHEN YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

Mind

How can mindfulness fit in your life.....	06
Take on life mindfully.....	14
Master your sleep cycle.....	18
It's time to take up yoga.....	22
Wake up your body and mind.....	28
Does your brain need a declutter?...	32
Soothe your stress.....	36

PAGE
36

ELIMINATE
STRESS

PAGE
06

MINDFULNESS

HOW TO APPLY MINDFUL
THINKING TO YOUR
EVERYDAY LIFE

PAGE
18

Fix your
sleep woes

PAGE
22

YOGA time

DISCOVER MORNING
SUN SALUTATIONS

Body

Superfoods or superfads?	46
Recipes: 200 cals or under	59
Recipes: 300 cals or under	60
Recipes: 400 cals or under	61
Fall in love with walking	64



Strength

Introduction to strength training	70
Strength training equipment	76
Master the gym	82
Be strong, get slim	90
Time to tone it up	94





How *can* MINDFULNESS *fit in* *YOUR* *life*

It is easier to apply mindfulness to your everyday life than you might think

The concept of mindfulness has gradually made its way into our everyday language over the last few years. You might have, like some of us, thought it was just fluff that didn't apply to you, but mindfulness can play an important role in our overall mental health, so taking time to educate yourself about it is very important.

Mindfulness can be practised in a number of different ways, from basic meditative practises and journaling to your health, nutrition and general wellbeing. It is all about being more aware and conscious about yourself internally but also learning to appreciate the small things that surround you. It's a lot easier

to incorporate into your life than you might think, too. Exercises like mediation only take a few minutes and can greatly benefit your mindset in several ways, so it's well worth the time investment. Yoga routines can also be incorporated into your workout sessions and help you feel more focused along with its more overt physical benefits.

Slow yourself down and take a more considered approach to your daily tasks, make time for self-care, reconnect with the environment around you and learn to understand your goals. Over the next few pages, we'll demonstrate the benefits of mindfulness and how you can begin to live your life more mindfully.



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness involves maintaining moment-to-moment awareness of your body, emotions and surroundings. It is a type of dynamic meditation where you consciously approach your decisions and actions without intensive interpretation or judgement.

We often find ourselves distracted by the stresses of everyday life, get tangled up in commitments and end up straying away from our true selves. Mindfulness is all about drawing this focus and awareness back into ourselves and our surroundings. Mindfulness encourages us into being more present in the here and now and experience things more intently. There are plenty of benefits to doing this: embracing mindfulness can help reduce overall stress levels, feelings of anxiety and depression as well as pain, insomnia and high blood pressure.

There are many ways to practise mindfulness that will fit into your everyday life. These might include learning to accept yourself and undertake self-care, live in the moment and find joy in simple pleasures, actively appreciate your surroundings, take time to consciously consider your daily decisions, pay attention to what is around you and take time to focus on your senses – touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. These simple exercises can be done anywhere and at any time, and research suggests engaging in mindfulness is particularly beneficial outside in order to connect with nature.

You can also practise mindfulness through structured exercises, like body scan meditation, sitting meditation, walking meditation, journaling, conscious breath-work and more. Unlike other examples, these exercises are a

little more involved and require time to be set aside in order to do them free of interruptions and distractions. You shouldn't let that dissuade you, however. They are still easy to fit into your day, so you should consider adding them into your early morning or evening routine.

Reflection is also an important aspect of mindfulness, as it helps you to really think about your feelings and emotions. This can then be applied to your personal relationships and ultimately make you a more rounded and empathetic person.

Try to engage with mindfulness every day for three months, and then spend some time reflecting on whether it has changed anything in your life. If done correctly, you'll find that you are in a far better place mentally and physically, and will want to continue it indefinitely. Make this commitment to reconnecting with and nurturing yourself and you will not regret it.



Try this: Take a walk and **RECONNECT WITH NATURE**

+ STEP ONE

Take a picnic blanket, bottle of water and notebook out on a walk outside somewhere peaceful, when the weather permits you to do so. Perhaps choose one of your favorite places in nature, next to a river or lake, or under a nice tree that catches your eye.

+ STEP TWO

Lay your blanket out on the ground, sit yourself down and get comfortable. It might be worth considering putting your phone on silent mode, too. Now, take a few moments to properly take in your immediate surroundings. What do you see? Take special care to absorb everything that you can see. Do you see anything new, noteworthy, or particularly unusual?

+ STEP THREE

Next, close your eyes: this next part is all about hearing. Concentrate on the different noises around you and try to hone in on each individual sound. What do you hear? Can you hear anything unexpected? Can you hear birds? The movement of wind against the nearby trees and plants? Or perhaps the flow of water?

+ STEP FOUR

Focus on how the breeze around you feels against your skin. Is it strong? Cold? Warm? If the sun is out, how does it feel against your body? Next, think about what you can smell. Is it a nice scent? Are there any unexpected smells? Can you detect more than one thing? What are they?

+ STEP FIVE

Finally, open your eyes. Take out your notebook and record everything that you experienced in the session. Then spend some time reflecting on how each thing made you feel emotionally. Make a note of that, too, and return to what you wrote down at a later date and compare it with other sessions.



Healthy body, healthy mind

Take a deep breath and let's look at how to add mindfulness into your workout

The goal of exercising mindfully is to gain a deeper understanding of your body and its needs, which will allow you to better build mental and physical strength in the way that will work best for you personally. Adding this increased awareness to your workout means that you will be more focused on the movements that you are doing, and this will reduce the risk of injury when you are exercising. You'll also find yourself in a better mindset to pinpoint where in your body your muscles are weaker and where you need to concentrate on more in order to build strength and endurance.

Forget high-intensity interval training, and instead, consider low-intensity interval training. LIIT aims to build strength and endurance through slow and considered movements which increases the length of time your muscles are under tension. The key is to move more slowly and use your breath to stay mindful during each rep of a set. This means that you will be more focused on performing the

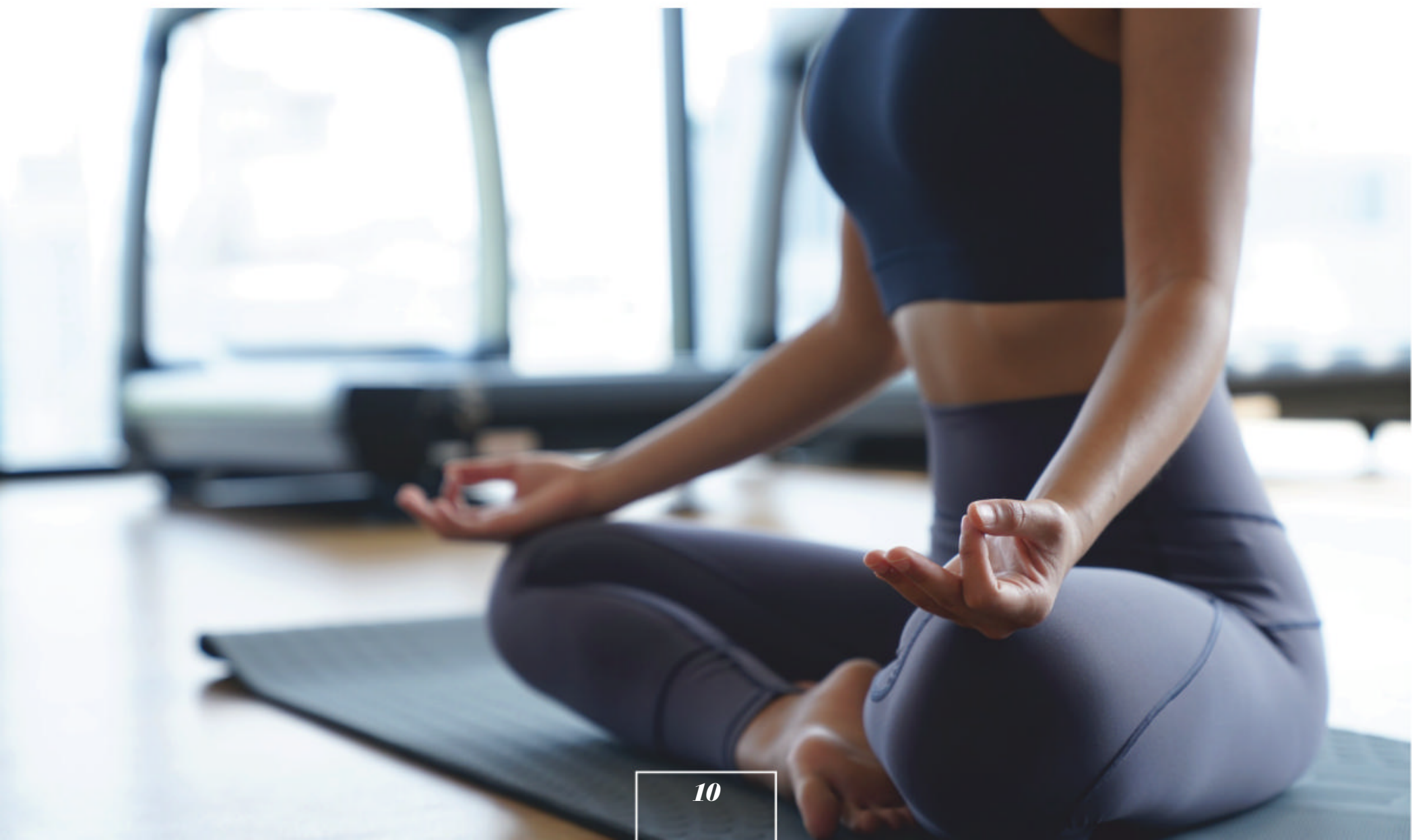
moves correctly, your muscles will be working a lot harder, and by staying fully present, you'll be better placed to judge whether the weights you are using are right for you, and when you have done enough for the session and need to begin resting.

Strength training and weight-lifting require a high level of focus and a strong mind, especially when it comes to working with heavier equipment – approaching weight-lifting in a mindful way will help put you in the mindset where you improve and progress. Consider visualising your workout or lift before you start. Think about the move you are about to perform, how to achieve the perfect form and how you'll demonstrate control over your breath. During the workout, focus on your breathing as you perform each rep. Being mindful and aware of your body means that you will have a better understanding of how you feel pre and post-workout. You can use this to adapt the workout you are about to do and also to plan your next session.

Focus on being kind to your body by listening to what it is telling you instead of just trying to power through and go harder than you maybe should.

Exercise routines such as yoga are a mindful form of workouts that encourage you to slow down and focus on your movements, how they feel and your breathing – we look more at yoga on page 22. Dynamic stretching is a similar form of exercise that mindfulness plays a huge part. Instead of pushing our bodies by trying to stretch them as far as possible, mindful dynamic stretching involves listening to your muscles and understanding how far they need and want to stretch. Note: It's important to stretch before and after every workout!

Taking your workout outside is another way to incorporate mindfulness into it. Why not go for a run through a forest? Take in your surroundings, the sound of your feet hitting the ground, the feel of the breeze against your skin, as well as how your body feels throughout.



UNDERSTAND YOUR GOALS

The very act of goal setting is a mindful exercise in itself, but the goals you do set must be realistic and achievable so as not to add in the stress of not achieving them.

Having fitness targets is important though, as it helps to give you focus and purpose – they hold us accountable and encourage us to keep going. Without set aims, it is easy to fall off-course and lose interest in the challenge. Be sensible when you set yourself a fitness goal and make sure it is achievable – remember that if you realise your goal is too easy or too hard, you can move the goalposts. In order to make things more achievable, simply focus on one target at a time – too many objectives can result in you being unable to fulfil your goals and might trigger negative self-talk,



which we want to avoid.

Make your goal unique to you, and own it. As tempting as it might feel, don't compare yourself to your peers and feel you have to match their successes. Your goal should be measurable and specific, but it's important to be flexible and kind to yourself if you don't achieve it as quickly as you want.

It is also important to understand and be aware of exactly what is driving your fitness goal – there might be a lot of emotions attached to it, so be aware of that and, above all, look after yourself and be patient.

Too many objectives can result in you being unable to fulfil your goals and might trigger negative self-talk



Reflect and refresh

Mindfulness allows you to be present in the moment, but also slows you down – it's important to slow down and take a moment to reflect and perhaps re-evaluate your day-to-day

Mindset

Do you need a mindset reset? Have you been a Negative Nancy recently and can't seem to break the cycle? Or do you find yourself worrying constantly about things? It is so important to take a moment to step back and re-evaluate what is going on in your head, and mindfulness helps us to do that.

If your inner voice becomes constantly negative, then it is time to be more mindful about what you are saying to yourself. If your words are negative, then your feelings will be too. Make an effort to listen to what you are telling yourself, and if you are feeling bad, work on making your

self-talk more positive. You'll probably be surprised at just how damaging our inner voices can become. Think about what you are telling yourself and why. Would you talk to a stranger or a loved one in the same way? Probably not. So don't treat yourself that way. Take time to consider the words that you use – replace the word 'failing' with 'learning', for example, and remember that learning is a process, so if you don't get something right the first time, you haven't failed: you're still getting the hang of things.

If you panic and flail when you are faced with a new challenge or change

and find yourself thinking that you are going to fail, try to stop and mindfully reframe the situation in your mind.

Try to think about the challenge that you have been presented in a positive way – try to see it as an opportunity and focus on the positive impacts it will have on your life. Shifting your perspective like this will make it easier to engage with the new thing.

Obviously, self-belief is critical, but remember to be realistic. Having a positive growth mindset doesn't mean anyone can do anything, but instead is about living up to your own potential. Positively work on your strengths.





Let's take a minute and **FIND A MINDFUL SPACE**

If you are feeling on edge and struggling to get your head into a mindful space, it might be the environment around you that is hindering you. If you can, create a space in your home dedicated to mindfulness, or find a spot outside that you can use as your escape.

The rooms in our homes often have clearly defined purposes, but we often lack a space to properly relax away from distractions. Take some time to wander around your home and think about how you are using the space. Look for places in your home that you perhaps aren't using much and could make into a relaxing nook. The place you choose doesn't have to be completely hidden away, as being able to see it will help your mind subtly remember the feeling of mindfulness that you

get when you relax. Just make sure that when you do use it, you won't be distracted by tech or other members of your household.

Curate the space to reflect yourself and also encourage mindfulness. Things like candles, essential oils and incense can really help to create a relaxing vibe – choose your favorite scents or consider lavender. Do you have a favorite blanket or cushion? Make sure that you include that in your space. Do you have a

favorite colour? Consider centering the decoration on that too. Perhaps include some plants or flowers too in order to feel more connected to nature. Be conscious of adding too many things to your mindful space though, as clutter can cause stress and anxiety – read about decluttering your surroundings on page 16.

If you don't have the space to make a permanent nook dedicated to mindfulness, then make a box of things that you can take out when you want some relaxing time to yourself. The process of arranging your space each time will be a mindful exercise in itself. Or if your home really won't work, spend time walking around your local area to find a spot you like that you can relax in. Keep a bag packed with a blanket and water bottle that you can grab on the way out.



Nutrition

Diet and nutrition is often a contentious issue for many of us. There are so many different diets and advice out there that it can be confusing, overwhelming and not feel very Zen or mindful at all. Eating mindfully involves being more conscious and aware of your consumption.



We often turn to eating when in an extreme state of emotion: we might celebrate with a chocolate bar or junk food, but similarly when we are feeling low will also turn those familiar comfort foods. If this sounds like you, then it might be time to try and be more conscious about your food decisions. There's obviously nothing wrong with naughty foods now and again, but it becomes a problem when you turn to them every time you are happy or every time you have a bad day. Instead of giving in to these compulsions, think about the emotions and think about your reasoning. Do you really need the food? Could you reward yourself with some other self-care instead? Or are you trying to avoid a problem by eating?

Emotional eating isn't the only thing we can work on when eating mindfully – your relationship with food

might be okay, but perhaps you aren't prioritizing your actual nutrition. Good nutrition is all about making sensible and positive choices. Approach your food shop mindfully and every time you pick something up, ask yourself if you need it and whether it is nutritionally valuable. Could you choose something that is better for your body?

It's also important to take time to think about how your body is feeling and functioning physically. We too often brush off tiredness as a result of being busy, for example, but actually, you might be lacking some iron in your diet, or similar.

Eating mindfully is also about where we source our food from and how we eat in general. If you are approaching food and eating more consciously, then perhaps you could consider incorporating a vegan diet, or eating organically and sustainably.

Take on **LIFE** *Mindfully*

These mindful activities will easily slot into your day

Incorporating mindful exercises into your day-to-day life will vastly improve your mental health and wellbeing. If you are sceptical about these mindful activities and unsure if you can spare time to accommodate them, we'll show you how easy they are to slot into your schedule in without hassle. They can be grounding and give you a sense of purpose that will help you to manage stress, become more focused and even overcome anxiety.

All you need is five minutes to meditate and quieten your mind each day, or consider waking up 15 minutes

earlier than usual to allow for a morning routine that will help you to start the day in the most positive way possible. Working on your posture can also be worked into your daily routine with ease. You'll be surprised at how much working on your posture will improve how your body and mind feels. Empower yourself by standing tall and consciously think about how your body feels.

You will have to dedicate a little more time to decluttering, but rewards are more than worth it. Free yourself of unnecessary junk and clear your mind in the process.

Meditate

Meditation is an exercise for your mind – the nature of the activity varies depending on the style of meditation that you are practising. It is a way of relaxing your body and mind, by slowing your breathing and calming your thoughts. It was originally created to overcome internal suffering and to connect more deeply to a higher reality. However, it is now often used for personal growth, enhancing performance or focus, and improving health and wellbeing.

Meditation encourages you to look internally to yourself instead of focusing on the external world and stresses that might be related to that. It will also encourage better self-awareness and understanding of your own mental and emotional state. Once you have mastered the ability to meditate, you'll be able to apply these techniques into everyday life, becoming more mindful, relaxed and focused. Meditation will give you the tools to better reflect on your experiences and emotions, putting you in a mindset where you can better approach challenges.

1 Find a comfortable place to sit on the floor, or a chair if you prefer. Set a five-minute timer (use a gentle alert to end the timer that won't startle you). Keep your back and neck straight and close your eyes. Take three initial deep breaths; inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Now seal your lips.

2 Begin focusing on how your body feels, notice the weight and shape of your form, the sensations you feel from the surface you are sitting on. Notice the clothes touching your skin and how the environment around you is interacting with your body.

3 Now mentally scan through yourself for any aches, pains or tension that you are feeling. If you find something, focus on it and continue to breathe deeply through your nose. Concentrate on expelling the tension through your nose as you exhale.

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

Before you start your meditation, make sure that you have removed any distractions that will pull you out back into the real world. If you are using your phone as a timer, set it to flight mode so that you don't get any notifications that will distract you – use a timer that isn't your phone if you can. Choose a quiet room away from any other people, and close the door if you are able to. Ideally, you should dim the lights and perhaps even close the curtains or blinds.

4 Bring your attention back to your breathing. Think about which parts of your body are involved in breathing. Observe how it feels when you breathe in. Are you breathing deeply? Is it slow or fast? Warm or cold?

5 Imagine that your thoughts and feelings are passing over you like clouds in the sky floating away. After the timer ends, remain seated with your eyes closed and ask yourself: what has changed? Do you feel calmer? Try to notice and feel the differences.



Declutter your life

If your surroundings are in a jumble, it's likely that your mind will also be in disarray, too. The amount of physical clutter that we can accumulate without realizing is quite surprising. Clearing out junk won't only make your environment more appealing and manageable, it can have the same effect on your life, too.

If you think about decluttering like removing weeds that are blocking the light from the flowers in your garden; removing the weeds will give

the flowers more room and energy to flourish – and removing your own clutter will have similar effects.

Clearing out clutter can feel liberating and reduce stress and anxiety. It isn't just a physical issue, as the accumulation of clutter is a result of not keeping on top of things, which can then result in an accumulation of emotional and mental mess. The process of decluttering can help you to be more mindful and encourage you to appreciate the important things in life, focusing on quality not quantity.

1 Look around the room you are in right now and make a note of every object that you can see. Then circle everything that could be classed as clutter.

2 Focus on each object individually and think about what it means to you. Does it spark any positive emotions? Do

you use it or need it? If you don't feel positively towards it and don't use or need it, then it's probably time to let it go.

3 Label four boxes: Charity, Friends, Sell and Keep. Now begin the process of sorting through everything. Put anything that can't be repurposed into a bin bag – recycle it if you can.

4 Once each of the boxes are full, make a commitment to action them. Take the charity box to a thrift store right away, for example. Don't allow these boxes to become a new form of clutter.

5 Clean and put everything that you want to keep away. Use this opportunity to properly organize all of your things.



WAKE UP MINDFULLY

Start your morning in the best way possible by creating a mindful morning routine that will help you to stay grounded and focused for the day ahead. A mindful wake-up routine is particularly important for those with stressful jobs or busy days, as it gives you a few extra minutes in the morning dedicated to yourself before the stresses of the day creep in. Early morning rituals are also beneficial to those suffering from anxiety or depression, as they will help with mental wellbeing during the rest of the day. A good morning routine gives us something to look forward to and encourages us to stay present.

1 Before bed, prepare for your morning. Lay out your clothes for the next day (as well as your favorite bath robe or slippers to put on in the morning) and prepare your

breakfast and/or lunch so that you have less to think about in the morning.

2 Use a dedicated alarm clock to wake up with rather than your phone. Avoid looking at your phone during these first mindful minutes so that you aren't confronted with a load of notifications to begin the day.

3 Make gratitude your first thought. Keep a gratitude journal that you write in each morning, or just think about what you are grateful for. Expressing gratitude early in the morning can positively influence the rest of your day.

4 Get out of bed, drink some water and then perform a few stretches before five minutes



of meditation. Consider the cat/cow yoga posture and child's pose to stretch out your back and then follow the five-minute meditation exercise that we guided you through on the previous page.

5 Make a healthy and balanced breakfast, and sit down in your favorite spot to enjoy it before getting ready for the rest of your day.



Improve your posture

Having good posture means that the muscles surrounding the spine are balanced and supporting your body equally. Good posture reduces lower back pain – slouching for long periods of time puts pressure on the posterior structures of the back. Poor posture can also cause tension headaches due to an increased amount of muscle tension in the back of the neck.

Ensuring that your joints and bones are aligned correctly means that you'll use your muscles in the right way, which will give you more energy overall – slouching puts your body in an unnatural position so it actually uses

more energy than if you were sitting or standing up straight. Good posture can also increase your lung capacity, improving your breathing and oxygen intake, making you feel healthier and more full of energy.

Standing or sitting up tall can boost your self-confidence and give you a presence that will be noticed by others - you'll appear more confident, self-assured and poised. Posture affects your mood in the same way – simply standing up, pulling your shoulders back and lifting your face can help you to feel more optimistic. Plus, good posture can also improve circulation, digestion, joint pain, core strength and workout performance.

THINGS TO AVOID

Most importantly, avoid slouching when you are sitting or standing. Make sure you keep your back straight-on, shoulders pulled back. Secondly, you should avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time. If you work at a desk, then make sure you take a break every 30 minutes or so to stand up and stretch. Walk to the kitchen, wiggle your toes, or stretch your back out in a child's pose or cat/cow.

1 Strengthen your lower back with glute bridges. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Engage your core and glutes and drive your hips upwards. Hold at the top then lower back down and repeat.

2 Strengthen your neck muscles with a head retraction exercise. Lie on the floor on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Pull your chin inwards towards your chest and hold for 10 seconds, release and then repeat 10 times.

3 Relieve any tension in your neck by stretching out your neck muscles. Stand up with a straight spine and head, then tilt your chin forwards until you feel a slight tightening in your clavicle.

4 Strengthen your core and lower back with a hip flexor stretch. Start in a lunge position with your back knee resting on the floor. The front leg should be bent at 90 degrees. Engage your core and pull your hips forward and in.

5 Roll out your spine with a thoracic foam roll. Lie on your back and put a foam roller in a horizontal position underneath you at the bottom of your rib cage. Support your neck with your hands and then slowly extend your spine over the roller, hold for a few seconds and then move up two inches at a time.





Master your SLEEP *Cycle*

Had yet another restless night? Fear not, try these expert tips for sleeping more soundly and make sure you finally wake up feeling rested...

Like food and water, sleep is key for survival – if we stopped sleeping we wouldn't last much longer than if we stopped drinking water.

A good night's kip perks up our immune system – especially important in the winter months – regulates hormones that control appetite, and boosts our mood. It also “cleans” out our brains. “During sleep, the space between brain cells expands 60% more than when we're awake,” explains Dr Sara Gottfried. “This allows the cerebral spinal fluid to flush out built-up toxins.”

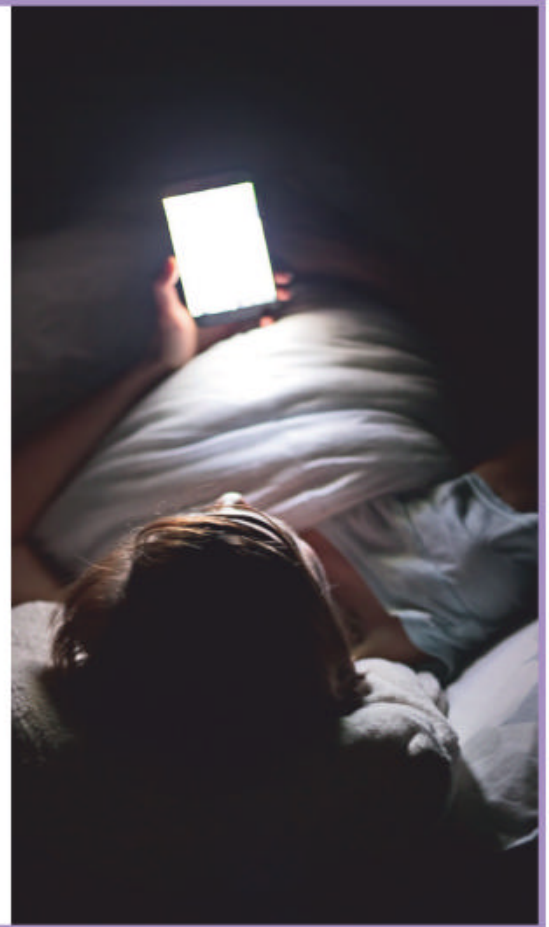
Turning to the dark side

Despite knowing the extensive benefits, we're still not getting enough shut-eye. Researchers have found that people are sleeping almost two hours less than they were in the 1960s. In fact, according to studies by Silentnight and the University of Leeds, 25% of Brits get by on five hours or less per night.

Overworked, caffeine-fueled and gadget-obsessed – every aspect of modern living is devastating our sleep routine. Thanks to increased city living, where old-school street lighting is being switched for ecological LEDs and binge-watching TV shows on laptops and iPads, our exposure to sleep-impacting blue light has soared.

Exposure to bright light first thing is key for triggering our sleep/wake cycle, telling our body it's time to get going. But artificial light at the wrong time (ie late at night) can alter our brainwave activity, glucose and insulin level production, and prevent us from dropping off.

3%
of the population
has the short sleep
gene, which allows
them to get by on
little sleep



Health risks

Margaret Thatcher may have famously run the UK on only four hours a night, but this limited sleep “badge of honor” is a worrying trend. According to Dr Sara Gottfried, under-sleeping is a health time bomb. Studies show that just one night without proper rest quadruples the risk of catching a cold. It also reduces reaction times, motivation and empathy, and lowers concentration and our ability to learn and store new information. Researchers from Pennsylvania State University also found getting less than six hours of sleep a night causes levels of hunger-triggering hormone ghrelin to go up and levels of leptin, that signals

we're full, to drop.

In the long-term, lack of sleep can increase your risk of cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, obesity, depression and heart disease – a study from Harvard Medical School found that people who sleep less than five hours a night for five consecutive years have a 300% increased risk of hardened arteries.

Quality vs quantity

So how much sleep do we need? “This varies from one person to the next and there are large variations according to our stage of growth and development,” says sleep expert Dr Nerina Ramlakhan.

The recommended average is 7.5 hours divided into five 90-minute cycles. But Dr Ramlakhan believes quality is key. “Getting five or six hours of deep, uninterrupted sleep is better than seven hours of broken sleep.” Each 90-minute stage is made up of four phases of non-REM, which moves from very light to very deep, and a fifth REM stage. “The healing process takes place during the deep sleep, but each sleep period heals a different organ in the body,” she explains.

Sleep sorted

Struggling to sleep? Don't panic, sleep physiologist Dr Guy Meadows is here to provide a helping hand in letting you drop off...

DILEMMA Waking up at night.

It's three in the morning, your mind is racing and panic sets in as you count down the hours left until you have to get up and start your day.

+ SORT IT Don't struggle with sleeplessness. Try acceptance and commitment therapy instead. This is all about accepting and acknowledging the negative thoughts that go through your mind when you are struggling to fall asleep. “Instead of battling with them and trying to block them, which can be exhausting, say, ‘I notice my mind telling me I'm not going to cope if I don't get to sleep now.’ Then let that thought go and practise a mindful activity, such as noticing the feel of the duvet on your feet, or the rise and fall of your breath,” explains Dr Meadows. Try to avoid climbing out of bed and stressing about the day ahead. “You need to learn how to be OK with being awake and feeling anxious. Evading the problem won't resolve it,” Dr Meadows adds.

***They don't
call it beauty
sleep for nothing!***

**Sleeping five or less hours
a night can make you look four
or five years older, according
to the Harvard School
of Public Health**

Accept and acknowledge the negative thoughts that go through your mind when you can't sleep

DILEMMA Can't get to sleep. Despite having a tiring day, your brain is whirring and you can't drop off.

+ SORT IT Wind down for 30 minutes before bed. Avoid checking your phone before lights out, as this may be stopping you from nodding off and could be affecting your sleep quality. "Blue light can interrupt your melatonin production (which helps control your sleep/wake cycles)," explains Dr Meadows. "Dim the lights, close your laptop and switch off the TV and your phone. Turn off any 'new message' alerts to keep you from reaching for your phone during the night or in the early morning if it's too tempting. Perform calming activities, such as packing your bag for the next day, and brushing your teeth, to allow your body and mind to prepare for sleep."

DILEMMA Waking up tired. You think you've slept well but don't actually feel particularly rested.

+ SORT IT Improve sleep quality. Snoring and the more severe condition of sleep apnoea – where your airway becomes restricted or obstructed at night – can impact sleep. Oxygen decreases and carbon dioxide increases, causing a sharp intake in breath, which wakes you up, fragmenting your sleep. You're often not aware of this, so you'll feel exhausted the next day without knowing why. Try losing weight to reduce excess pressure on your windpipe, lie on your side to keep airways open, be aware of dairy intolerances (that can produce excessive mucus and coat airways), as well as antihistamines and alcohol, which can cause your muscles to relax.

Do you often feel groggy in the morning?

Set your alarm time for 7.5 hours after your sleep time so you wake up at the end of a complete full cycle, instead of waking up during a deep sleep phase

Want to be a morning lark?

It turns out the early bird may get more than the worm. Those who wake up earlier feel more optimistic and proactive than those who rise later. Aim to get up 10 minutes earlier every day

DOZING DOS AND DON'TS

Dr Ramlakhan reveals her tips for sleeping better

DO THINK ABOUT THE HALF-LIFE OF CAFFEINE

We all know cutting down will help with sleep issues, but very few of us think about the half-life of the coffee or tea we have. The half-life of caffeine is five hours, which means if you have a drink at 5pm, you'll still have half that amount in your blood by 10pm.

DON'T COMMUTE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH

Heading to work without breakfast means your body ends up running on "adrenaline energy", which is one of the main causes of shallow "muddy" sleep. Eat breakfast every day and within 30 minutes of waking up.

DO BOOST YOUR VITAMIN B6

Adequate levels of vitamin B6 (which can be found in wholegrain cereals, sweet potatoes and chicken), and the amino acid tryptophan (eggs, fish, nuts and seeds) can help increase levels of sleep-inducing hormones serotonin and melatonin.

Are sleep apps a turn-off?

They can be a useful sleeping aid, but according to Dr Ramlakhan, they're not for everyone. "Sleep apps can make sensitive sleepers more anxious, while light sleepers may find their sleep disrupted by gadgets under their pillow," she says. She believes people using them for comparative purposes will benefit the most. However she wouldn't recommend continuous use – "three nights in a row is enough to reveal improvements." Rather than relying on apps, she thinks we need to listen to our bodies more.



Wind down for 30 minutes before bed. Avoid checking your phone before lights out, as this may be stopping you from nodding off

Your ultimate sleep aids

✦ **DOWNLOAD THIS...** **Twilight app (free, Android) and the Night Shift feature of iOS devices** Both of these cut blue light from your screen, while the Bedtime Mode on iOS devices puts a halt on notifications too.

✦ **SIP THIS...** **Clipper Snore & Peace Chamomile Lemon Balm and Lavender Infusion** With a blend of calming chamomile, lavender and soothing lemon balm, it will induce Zen-like tranquillity before lights out.

✦ **WEAR THESE...** **Noise-Masking Sleepbuds** If sirens or a snoring partner is stopping you dropping off, try these. The tiny headphones play soothing sounds to cover up unwanted night-time noise.

Your night-time NUMBER GUIDE

7am

This is the best time to exercise if you want a better night's sleep. A study carried out by Appalachian State University found it reduces night-time blood pressure by 10% – which can impact shut-eye – and encourages longer and more restorative sleep cycles.

18C

This is the ideal bedroom temperature, studies have found. A gentle drop in your body's core temperature triggers "hit the hay" mode.

4-7-8

Nod off in no time with Dr Andrew Weil's simple breathing technique, which helps to achieve a relaxed and clear state of mind almost immediately. Exhale through your mouth, then inhale through your nose for the count of four, hold your breath for seven and exhale through your mouth for eight. Repeat three times.

46

The number of extra minutes of sleep you'll get by heading outdoors. Morning light is best, as it resets your body clock.

30 minutes

The ideal power nap length. Any longer and you'll enter deep sleep, which can leave you feeling lethargic. If possible, take one around 2-3pm, when it's least likely to interfere with your night-time sleep.

Build strength, gain
flexibility and improve
your mental wellbeing

It's time
to take up
YOGA

It is thought that yoga has a 5,000-year-old history, originating in India, and this ancient practice has made a place for itself in our day-to-day lives.

If you have never tried yoga, it can seem quite intimidating at first. The pictures we often see of super-fit people contorting their bodies into various shapes while doing yoga can be quite off-putting – especially to a complete novice. But the first thing we should mention is that everyone has to start somewhere, and your yoga routine should be all about you and what your body can do. Yoga is a supremely adaptable exercise and far more accessible than you might think. It suits all shapes, ages and abilities, and there has been an increase in modified versions that are even more inclusive, such as chair or seated yoga.

Once you've been to your first yoga class you'll soon realise that everyone is focusing purely on themselves and not on each other. If you are still hesitant, though, there are tons of great online materials that will enable you to practice yoga in your own space. Yoga with Adriene is a great resource on YouTube (visit www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene).

Jennifer Kesik, founder of All Flow Yoga in Bournemouth (www.allflowyoga.co.uk) says, "At All Flow Yoga we believe that yoga is about union. It is about connection. It is about being present, the here and now. Approaching yourself with loving kindness, spreading good vibes and compassion to the rest of the world.

"Yoga offers us an invitation to take time out of your daily routine and immerse yourself in a practice that disconnects us from distraction and noise around us, and brings us in tune with who we are at our core.

"I like to think of physical benefits that come from the yoga practice as 'side-effects,'" Jennifer continues. "We obtain a toned body, strength and flexibility through the practice, but it is the essence of yoga – cantering, mindfulness and being able to let go of whatever it is that we are facing in the outer environment that changes our life."

This ancient practice is very good for both our overall health and mental wellbeing, plus, if you are combining yoga with strength training, it is even more beneficial to your body. It counts as a strength workout on its own and will help you to improve your balance, core strength and flexibility. The slow considered movements, combined with deep breathing exercises, helps to increase blood flow and warm up muscles while holding poses will help to build strength.

Yoga is particularly beneficial for people who sit at a desk for most of their day due to the stretching nature of many of the moves. Day-to-day, many of us forget to stretch our bodies out properly and we've probably all been guilty of skipping stretches before or after a workout, so by simply slowing down with yoga and taking time on each move, you'll make a huge difference to your joints and overall muscle health.

Three benefits TO YOGA

1 Community

Going to an actual yoga class will provide you with a community of like-minded connections that we've all likely been craving in recent months in the light of a seemingly endless pandemic. And, if nothing else, this will boost your mood and general mental health.

2 Exercise

When you practice yoga regularly, you'll sleep better due to the meditative properties of the exercise. Not all types of yoga are good to do just before sleep and for optimal relaxation, though: hot yoga and the more athletic vinyasa will get your heart rate pumping, but yin yoga or nidra are ideal pre-sleep and for relaxation purposes.

3 Wellbeing

Practising yoga regularly is believed to improve your heart's health as well as blood pressure due to the fact it helps to reduce stress and overall body inflammation. Plus it helps with aches and pains – particularly lower back pain and arthritis. The meditative aspects of yoga will also help clear your mind and make you more focused.

It's a time to focus internally on yourself and forget all of your troubles

When you first start your yoga journey, you might feel a little overwhelmed with having to concentrate on the positioning of your body, while remembering to breathe and clear your mind to enter a mindful space. It can all feel a little counterintuitive at first, but you'll soon get into the flow (quite literally) of things. Before you know it, the moves will begin to feel like second nature and so will your ability to escape from your thoughts and life distractions.

Types of yoga

There are many different types of yoga, but here we are going to look closer at the ones you are most likely to come across. Vinyasa yoga is often seen as the most athletic form of yoga as it involves stringing postures together, moving from one to the next in a flow. It's likely that no two vinyasa classes will be the same, unlike fixed forms like Bikram yoga, which features the same 26 postures each time, or Ashtanga which has the same sequence every time. The changing nature of vinyasa yoga helps to develop a more balanced body and prevent injuries or aches that might occur from performing the same moves each time.

Yoga nidra is a form of guided meditation also known as 'a yogic sleep' and is usually practiced while lying down with a teacher guiding you through the exercise. It is supposed to turn your focus inwards to yourself and float into a relaxed state of self-awareness. This form of yoga is the ultimate mindful exercise.

Then there are more vigorous forms, such as hot yoga which is practiced in a humid room at a temperature of around 40°C. There are many types of yoga performed in a hot yoga studio, one of which is the previously mentioned Bikram

yoga. It is usually a 90-minute program that consists of a series of extended standing and stretching postures. The more demanding nature of the poses, combined with the heat, is designed to raise your heart rate and exercise your muscles. Hot yoga is not for everyone, though, as the rooms are (unsurprisingly) sweltering, so check with a medical professional before giving it a go. Hydration is important for all yoga, but even more so when it comes to hot yoga.

Aerial yoga, meanwhile, mixes yoga, Pilates callisthenics and acrobatics using a suspended hammock. Being suspended enables you to stretch deeper than traditional forms of yoga while providing a full-body workout.

Practice for mindfulness

The advantages of yoga are seemingly endless, but the fact you'll be able to combine a mindful activity with exercise is one of the main benefits, in our opinion. If you decide to practice yoga at home, we'd recommend creating a space dedicated to it. Even if it isn't a permanent setup, the very act of creating a mindful environment each time will be a meditative experience. Consider lighting some soothing candles or incense, dim the lights, lay out your mat and perhaps a blanket and cushion, turn off your technology and close the door to any distractions if you can. Normally, yoga studios will create a calming atmosphere for you to begin, or if you can get yourself to a beach session we'd highly recommend the mindful benefits of feeling the sea breeze and looking out into the ocean while you practice.

Yoga will give you an escape from your everyday life; it's a time to focus internally on yourself and forget all of your troubles. Try not to think about your workday, or what you might cook for dinner while you practice. Aim to clear your mind and just focus on the movements, breathing, and how your body feels as you move (or lie in a yogic sleep). Listen to the music, feel the sensations in your body and don't let any distractions from outside of your yoga bubble creep in. It's a time to focus entirely on yourself.



Breathe...

Controlling your breathing will help cleanse your body and master the positions better. Start by trying to notice how you breathe – do you know when your breath is usually shallow or when it speeds up? Knowing your breathing patterns will help stress management and also just thinking about your breath tends to calm it.

Learning how to use your breath in asana practice is important. Different teachers will have different styles and priorities, but generally when to inhale and exhale should be similar...

+ WHEN BENDING FORWARD, YOU SHOULD EXHALE

+ WHEN YOU LIFT OR OPEN YOUR CHEST, YOU SHOULD INHALE

+ WHEN TWISTING, EXHALE



Get started

If after reading this you find that your interest in yoga has been piqued, it's very easy to get started and experimenting with this popular form of exercise. Most towns and cities will have their own yoga studios which you can join, where you can be guided by an expert and be part of a wider yoga community. If you don't want to commit to something like that straight away, however, there are many resources out there which you can use to find out if yoga is for you. Firstly, there are an array of YouTube channels you can explore, like the aforementioned Yoga with Adriene. But you want to quickly want to experiment with some moves right now, just turn the page to find a set of essential moves that you can get started with.

So what are you waiting for? Get started on your yoga journey now!

ALSO TRY PILATES

Pilates is very similar to yoga in that it is not only an exercise that sculpts your body, but it also helps to clear your mind, gives you energy and a sense of inner balance.

When you are practising Pilates (and yoga) you will be concentrating on one thing: your body, and because Pilates, like vinyasa yoga, can be strenuous and require more concentration, you will have to clear your mind to focus. Pilates is a great way of meditating without sitting still and feeling like you might be wasting time, plus the feeling of having accomplished something for your body will boost your mood, and the endorphins from the work will leave you feeling amazing.

Much like yoga, Pilates also works to relieve stress and



tension built up in your muscles through gentle stretching and gradual conditioning.

A Pilates workout will help you to metabolize the stress hormones that build up in your muscles. The fascial release techniques often featured in a Pilates session will also help loosen tight muscles in ways you are unable to in normal stretching. And, when you release stress from your body, you'll release it from your mind, too, leaving you feeling more relaxed overall.



ESSENTIAL

YOGA

POSES FOR

BEGINNERS



Do you have an appetite to give yoga a try? We don't blame you! This collection of poses is a good place to get started...

The ancient exercise of yoga has heaps of physical and mental benefits. It has in the past, however, suffered from a reputation as being an exercise only accessible to the more flexible among us. This isn't true, though: yoga is in fact an extremely adaptable form of exercise, making it suitable for people of all ages, shapes and abilities. Thankfully, it is far more widely understood and practiced these days, especially with the introduction of modified versions of yoga – such as chair/seated yoga – proving that anyone can get involved if they wish to.

Yoga counts as a strength session to keep your muscles strong, and it also helps you to improve your flexibility, balance and co-ordination. Because of its attention to breathing, posture and stillness, yoga is a mindful form of exercise. There is also some evidence that shows it can help to reduce stress and anxiety, be used to manage back or muscle pain, and could even be beneficial for those with high blood pressure or heart conditions. With all of these advantages, it is worth making yoga part of your fitness regime, and here we look at some of the best poses to get you started.

Cat/cow pose

Cat/Cow is a basic pose with a wide range of benefits. You start on your hands and knees, with your wrists under your shoulders and knees under your hips, lining up at 90-degree angles. When you breathe out, you round your spine, pulling your head towards your navel – this is the Cat form of the pose. As you breathe in, you turn your head towards the sky and open the chest, creating a curve in your spine. This is a great stretch for the back and hips, as well as strengthening the muscles in the spine and neck. It's a good pose for mornings, to release any tension built up from lying in bed at night. For women, it can also help alleviate pain associated with menstrual cramps.



Warrior II pose

The Warrior poses help to build standing leg strength. These are also strong poses that can boost mental well-being by creating feelings of empowerment. Warrior II targets the hips, inner thighs and groin areas, opening them all up in a powerful full-body position. Stand with your feet wide apart. Start with your right foot and turn it 90 degrees to the right. Your left foot should turn about 45 degrees to the right. The heel of your right foot should be in line with the side arch of your left foot. Bend your knee towards the right foot so that your knee sits directly over your ankle, but keep your core centred between both feet. Your arms then stretch out to both sides, and you look forward towards your right foot. Repeat on the left side.



Child's pose

This is a very simple, relaxing pose and is often used in yoga practice as a rest pose to release muscles in between more intense poses. But it's also a powerful pose in its own right and can be a great way to start or end the day. Kneel down and tip forward, bringing your arms in front of you, forehead to the floor and push your chest down. Keep your bottom pushing towards your heels and lengthen through your spine. Take deep breaths as you sink into the pose and hold. This can help to release tension in the body, as well as help your back to stay strong and flexible.

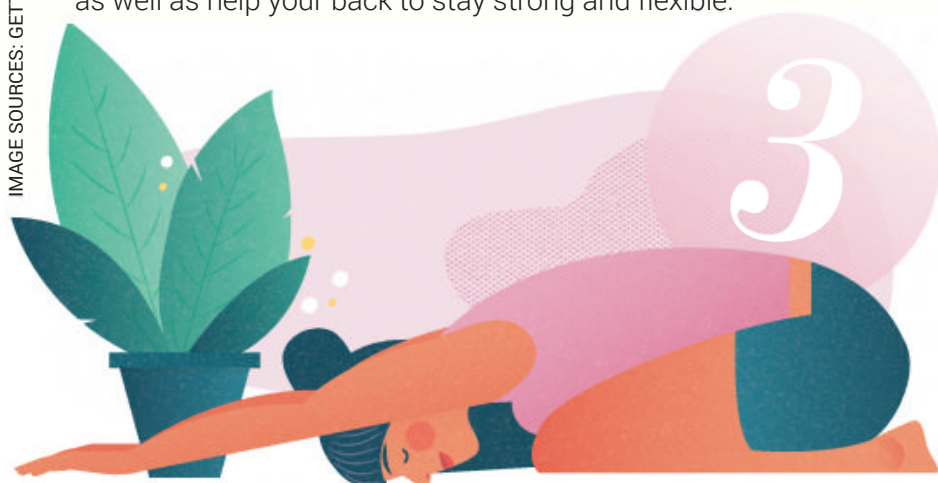


IMAGE SOURCES: GETTY



Downward-facing dog

This is one of the most common yoga poses, thanks to its full-body strengthening potential. Starting on all fours, with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips, lift your knees up and push your hips towards the sky. Your hands should be firm to the ground. Push your chest and head between your arms, and keep your core tight. You may have to bend your knees if your hamstrings are feeling tight, and your heels can lift off the ground when you first start. You're aiming to create straight lines and form a triangle.



Standing forward bend

Start in a standing position, with feet firmly planted hip-width apart. Draw your spine to its full length, then bend forwards, hinging at the hips. With each breath try to relax the neck and shoulders. Your hands can hang, grasp your ankles or lightly touch the floor for support. Your knees should be bent as much as you need for comfort, and you can start to work on straightening them over time. This forward bend pose helps the hamstrings, relieving tension and creating length in your body. If you can't invert your head in this way, try a Seated Forward Bend instead, with your legs out in front of you as you sit on the floor, and hinging from the hips towards your feet.

Wake up your **BODY** *&* **MIND**

This gentle yoga sequence
will start your day in a
positive way



The sun salutation, or 'surya namaskar', is a series of linked yoga poses that creates a graceful flow of movement. "Traditionally, this flow was practiced first thing in the morning at the break of dawn, to greet the sun, welcome in a new day and to harness and draw in the sun's energy," explains yoga instructor Hannah Barrett. "The sun salutation can be the perfect morning wake-up routine to prepare your mind and body for the day ahead."

Morning movement

"You can choose to do this flow on its own or you can complete it at the start of a longer practice to warm up and invigorate the body," explains Hannah. "Yoga traditions such as ashtanga that advocate an early morning practice advise that you do your yoga flow on a completely empty stomach," continues Hannah. If this is difficult for you, have a light snack before you get on your mat.

New to yoga?

"Sun salutations can be amazing for beginners to improve flexibility, strength, energy and endurance," Hannah tells us. "When you first start the movements they can feel foreign and complicated but over time they will start to feel familiar and like a moving meditation."

Feel-good **FLOW**

**YOU'LL REAP PLENTY OF
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
BENEFITS FROM
PRACTICING SUN
SALUTATIONS:**

- ✦ **Strength and flexibility.**
- ✦ **Increased energy.**
- ✦ **Improved circulation.**
- ✦ **Better digestion.**
- ✦ **Weight loss.**
- ✦ **Stress reduction.**
- ✦ **Hormone balance.**

Flow mindfully

The number of sun salutations you do depends on how you are feeling and what your body needs at that time. This could be as little as two sets or as many as you can manage. If you're doing them daily, it's even more important to do them mindfully.

"The sun salutation includes a lot of lowering down from plank and forward folds," says Hannah. "So to avoid hamstring and shoulder injuries you could try changing them up every other day." Bend the knees in the forward folds on one day, and have straighter legs the next. You may find on some days you need to miss out the chaturangas (see right) completely. "Yoga is all about the body and mind connection so check in with how you feel and what you need, not what you think you need," advises Hannah.

Elevate the experience

Make the area around you safe and try closing your eyes during the flow. "Withdrawing the sense of sight can help anchor us into the present moment and take us from the outside to the inside," says Hannah. "It's difficult and it can bring up a lot emotionally, so move slowly and be mindful of each transition. The present moment will be magnified and you will tune deeper into your breath; feeling and hearing the sensations of your body moving. You will notice that the need for focus is heightened." Use this as an exercise to adapt to change and to find gratitude for the smaller aspects of your life – the things that are often ignored. Take note of what arises emotionally and mentally and how you feel at the end.

Embrace the positives

Immediately after doing the sun salutation it's likely you'll feel focused and full of energy for the day ahead. "Over time, you may notice your stress levels are lower, your muscles get stronger and more toned, you are more flexible, your digestion improves and your cardiovascular health increases," highlights Hannah.



TOP TIP!

If the weather allows for it, try doing your sun salutations outdoors to feel the calm and harness the energy of the elements.

Speed check

Practicing sun salutations at different speeds can have different effects. "If done slowly they can help strengthen and tone the muscles and provide an almost meditative experience," explains Hannah. "Doing them at a faster pace can be a great workout for the cardiovascular system and help to bring heat into the body."

Need more guidance?

A qualified yoga teacher can guide you through the sun salutation sequence and ensure your technique is correct. They can also help you to modify postures to suit your body and to help you flow with your breath.

Download Hannah's app, which features a sun salutations class. Visit hannahbarrettyoga.com/app.

MASTER YOUR SUN SALUTATION

Focus on good form throughout and keep your breath steady and even. Don't push yourself if you find any of the moves a struggle. This should feel relaxing and reawakening.

1 Upward salute

Stand tall on your mat, feet together and arms by your sides. Inhale and reach both arms up high, extending your spine and lifting your ribs to open your chest.



2 Standing forward fold

Exhale and stretch forwards and down, folding at your waist, keeping your back straight and bending your knees so your hands lie flat on the floor beside your feet.



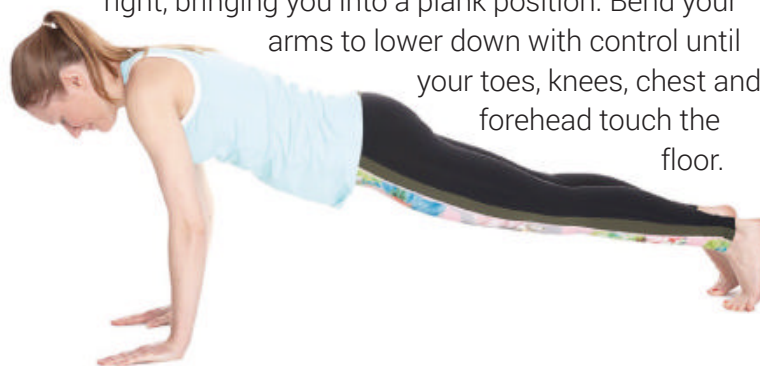
3 Low lunge

Inhale and take a step back with your right leg, lowering your right knee to the floor, keeping your front knee at a right angle and hands on the floor. Look up and extend your spine forwards, opening your chest.



4 Plank and Chaturanga

Hold your breath as you step your left leg back to join the right, bringing you into a plank position. Bend your arms to lower down with control until your toes, knees, chest and forehead touch the floor.



One set = TWO ROUNDS, ONE ON THE RIGHT LEG, AND ANOTHER ON THE LEFT.

5 Cobra

Inhale up to cobra position. Lying on your stomach, legs together straight out behind you, hands directly under your shoulders with elbows in tight by your sides, lift your head and shoulders off the floor looking up and extending back.



6 Downward dog

Exhale and press hands into the floor, lifting your hips up in the air. Press back into the downward dog position. Bend your knees slightly to keep your spine long and straight. Draw shoulders away from your ears and let your head relax. Hold for a couple of breaths.

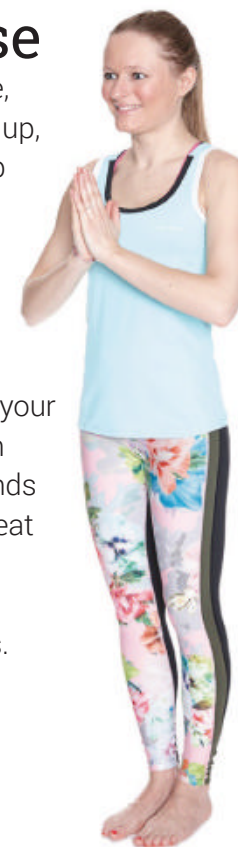


7 Low lunge

Inhale, look up and step your right foot forward between your hands in a lunge position. Exhale and bring your left foot to meet your right (keep hands on the floor and knees bent, unless you're very flexible).

8 Upward salute and prayer pose

Inhale, stand up, sweep your arms up and back, lifting your ribs. Exhale, bring arms back by your side and finish by placing hands in prayer. Repeat from Step 1, alternating your legs.



DON'T FORGET

AIM TO BREATHE SLOWLY AND EVENLY WITH EVERY MOVE.

A woman's face is shown in profile, looking down, with her eyes closed. She is surrounded by lush green leaves, some of which are in the foreground, partially obscuring her face. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Our brains are a feat of nature. Incredibly, they can store as much information as the entire internet

Does your BRAIN need a DECLUTTER?

Forget the bathroom cabinet, there's something else in need of a clean-out...

At the moment, it feels like you can't fold a jumper without hearing about the life-changing 'home-tidy' Marie Kondo method. But what if there was something more in need of a declutter than our overspilling sock drawer? Just like our homes, our brains aren't a pretty sight when they're clogged up with too much bric-a-brac. So it's important to do a regular brain blitz and clear out our grey matter. We'll show you how...

Information overload

Our brains are a feat of nature. Incredibly, they can store as much information as the entire Internet. "We live in an age where there is just so much content available to us at a click of a button," says mindset and business coach Irene Moore (irenemoore.com). As our inboxes are filling up with endless newsletter sign-ups and notifications, so too are our minds. This overload of information can make us feel overwhelmed, and many of us are also making too many commitments. Researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that each stressful incident could age our brain by one-and-a-half years. So, unwinding is an important step in the decluttering process.



HOW...

1 Swap busy for breathe

Using words like 'stressed', 'busy' or 'hectic' can make you feel overwhelmed. Every time you think 'busy', swap that word for 'breathe' and then take a deep breath in and out.

2 Beditate in the morning

Want to tap into your creative brainwaves today? Jumping out of bed stressed won't help. "When you're in a stressed beta brainwave mode, you're very focused on a particular goal – great for when you know what you're doing, but not so good for problem-solving," explains beditation creator Laurence Shorter. "Beditating, which involves spending five minutes in bed before you get up, slows down and relaxes your brainwaves, so you move from stress-driven beta-wave mode into a more relaxed alpha-wave mode." Try beditating for a clearer, calmer mind. Lie there and do nothing. Acknowledge the voice in your head that says you need to be doing something, but don't react. Also be mindful of your body lying on the bed. Don't worry if you struggle to feel calm, just repeat the process

until you do. Once you feel relaxed, ask yourself... "What are my priorities for the day?" Don't worry if the answer doesn't come to you immediately. Hopefully, by relaxing, you'll give your brain space to think and conjure up creative solutions.

3 Feel the pressure

Sleep is key for brain functions, including how neurons communicate. But a jam-packed brain can stop you from switching off. Try this snooze-inducing trick – rub the spot behind your ear where there's a hollow. "It's one of the most relaxing points in the body," says Gillian Berry, a member of the British Acupuncture Council.

4 Learning to say no

Constantly feel under pressure to say yes? Your people-pleasing ways may be having a negative effect. Overcommitting can cause stress levels to rise, as we agree to give time and energy we don't have, and can cause us to foster resentment. Saying no can help you balance the demands of others, and leave you feeling more in control. "If you find it hard to say no to someone's face, tell them you'll check your diary and get back to them. Honestly explain that you'd like to help but don't want to let anyone down as you are overcommitted," explains psychotherapist Juliet Grace.



Why is mental clutter bad?

Like that 'everything' cupboard under the stairs where we chaotically stuff all our odds and sods, our brain can struggle to sort through all the trash and find what we actually need. "Having a cluttered mind can be debilitating and can leave us feeling unfocused and anxious," says Irene. "Often we don't know where to begin, because there is so much swirling around in our brain."

While being informed is never bad – after all, our minds are designed to think and process information – overstimulation can have a negative effect. "Like most things, too much of anything isn't good for you," she adds.

When we overload ourselves, instead of becoming smarter as we tackle lots of new challenges, our brain's ability to learn and problem-solve actually decreases. It can also cause us to overthink things, which can feel draining and eventually even be a cause of chronic stress. This can suppress your immune system, upset your digestive system and increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

"When we have a clearer mind, we're able to process information effectively and make better decisions," says clinical hypnotherapist Fiona Lamb. "By decluttering, our mind becomes sharper – clearing the old for the new."



TECH TIP

Bombarded with work emails after work? Put your out of office on when you leave for the day and say you'll reply when you're next at work. And then STICK TO IT!



Clear our minds

So how can we flick our filter switch and make our brains less busy?

+ DO A DIGITAL DETOX

"We're bombarded with messages, calls and never-ending notifications," says life coach Carole Ann Rice. "We get a dopamine thrill, so it can become addictive, but this eventually becomes toxic." Take time away from your phone, – read, go for a walk or meet a friend – and avoid taking it into the bedroom. Download the Space app (iOS/Android). It encourages mindful screen time by setting screen unlock and time use goals as well as alerting you to overuse.

+ SAY TA-TA TO TO-DOS

Endless checklists might make us feel more organized, but they're actually draining our brains. Carole Ann suggests employing her 3D concept of Do it, Dump it or Delegate it...

Do it Devote time to completing a task entirely. Be realistic about how long it will take and focus on one thing at one time.

Dump it This refers to time and tasks. Say no more often – it stops you becoming overloaded. Don't do something out of obligation or guilt, and

ensure you leave 'white space' in your diary (at least a couple of days free) that is just for you.

Delegate it Don't have time, energy or the inclination for a task? Ask for help. Do a 'skills swap' – whatever you dislike doing, someone else will love.

+ SAY NO TO MULTITASKING

Despite popular belief, it doesn't make you more efficient. In fact, research shows that our brains are not nearly as good as we think they are at handling multiple tasks, and could even reduce productivity by 40%. Shifting your attention and focus from one thing to the next makes it difficult to tune out distractions, and can cause mental blocks that can slow you down.

+ JOURNAL FOR 5 MINUTES

Irene recommends setting out some time each day – ideally morning and night – to list all of your thoughts. "Try and stick to the same time every day if you can so you start to create a routine for decluttering your mind," she says. Prioritize these thoughts from one to three, with number one being the most important. Focus on trying to complete the ones this week.

+ GET MOVING

"Exercising boosts blood flow and releases happy hormones dopamine and serotonin," says Fiona. "This clears the mind and strengthens brain nerve cells." Dancing, in particular, requires mental skills and co-ordination, which improves cognitive function and slows down ageing.





CLICK YOURSELF *calm*

Do you get that sinking feeling every time another email pops up on your phone or computer screen? An out-of-control inbox can be enough to drive the most calm of us to our third espresso of the morning – a study by Loughborough University found that measurements of heart rate, blood pressure and the stress hormone cortisol were shown to peak at points in the day when people's inboxes were fullest. So here's how to get a handle on your inbox. All it takes is five minutes a week...

DEVELOP A SCHEDULE

It takes workers a third longer to complete a task if they're interrupted by emails. So establish a routine for when you check emails. A study by the University of British Columbia found that limiting it to three times per day has a significant impact on mental health. Think about the quietest moments in your day to block off as your email sessions.



JUNK THE JUNK MAIL

An inbox constantly filling up with messages from mailing lists you signed up to years ago can make you feel out of control (and wake you up when they ping through at 2am). So take five minutes to unsubscribe from them.

BE A FOLDER FAN

Filing emails into folders makes it easier to find relevant messages. Look at the first three pages of your inbox and note down recurring subject matters – these should be the names of your folders. In future, once you've dealt with an email, drop it into the relevant folder.

HIT SNOOZE

If your inbox gets packed out with emails that are important but not right now, try using the 'Snooze' function (available on Gmail, Outlook and more). They'll be removed from your inbox temporarily and land back in it on the day and time you state.



Soothe *your* *stress*

Is anxiety slowly creeping up on you? Deal with everyday angst by rethinking your mindset and making a few tweaks to your diet and lifestyle choices

The unprecedented living nightmare of 2020 and beyond resulted in a roller coaster of negative emotions for many of us. If you're feeling low as a result, you're not alone – nearly half of all British adults experienced high levels of anxiety during lockdown.



GP Dr Folusha Oluwajana says: "It's normal to be stressed and scared during a crisis but the way we deal with these feelings can have huge effects on our mental health.

"When our brains decide that a stressful event is occurring, the sympathetic nervous system is stimulated; known as fight-or-flight response, to keep the body at a steady state of equilibrium. In response to a stress, the brain stimulates this part of the nervous system, which then activates the adrenal glands." Fight or flight results in faster breathing and increased blood pressure. Your sense of pain is reduced, and strength and performance levels are increased.

"In addition, the brain releases hormones that stimulate the adrenal glands to release the stress hormone cortisol, which enhances the effects of adrenaline by releasing more glucose," says Dr Oluwajana. "It also shuts down systems that are nonessential to the stress response, such as the digestive and reproductive systems."

In the short-term, this stress response isn't a worry; chronic stress, however, can be detrimental.

"Persistently high glucose levels can lead to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. Excess cortisol can lead to digestive issues and flare-ups of conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome," says Dr Oluwajana.

Plus, you may be more prone to infections and injury; persistently raised cortisol levels suppress the immune system and promote muscle and protein breakdown.

The production of 'happy hormone' serotonin can also be altered leading to irritability, disturbed sleep and mental health disorders. Here we'll share some of the biggest stress culprits and suggest ways to feel more serene and less stressed.

STRESS CULPRIT *Night-time panic*

The evening is often the time when anxiety rears its ugly head. If you've been frantically juggling tasks throughout the day and haven't really had a moment to pause, it's these night time hours when anxiety can strike. You might find it difficult to get to sleep, or lie awake at 3am stressing about everything from work deadlines to your relationship. According to a wellbeing report by Aviva, as many as 16 million of us suffer from sleepless nights. "Fragmented sleep is associated with persistently raised cortisol levels throughout the day. This can cause of vicious of cycle of stress, raised cortisol levels and sleep disturbance," believes Dr Oluwajana.

STRESS-SOOTHING PLAN:

Practical steps such as avoiding digital devices and sticking to a regular nightly routine where you go to bed at the same time can help to improve sleep quality, and thankfully your diet can also play an important part of sleep success. A study published in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine found that diets that are low in fibre and high in saturated fat and sugar are linked to poorer quality sleep with less time in the restore phase of slumber, known as slow-wave sleep.

Frequent night-time awakenings can also alter appetite hormones such as leptin and ghrelin, which can cause you to have cravings and an increased appetite. To counteract these effects, eat more sleep-friendly foods. These include magnesium-packed leafy greens and tryptophan-rich chickpeas, turkey and milk.

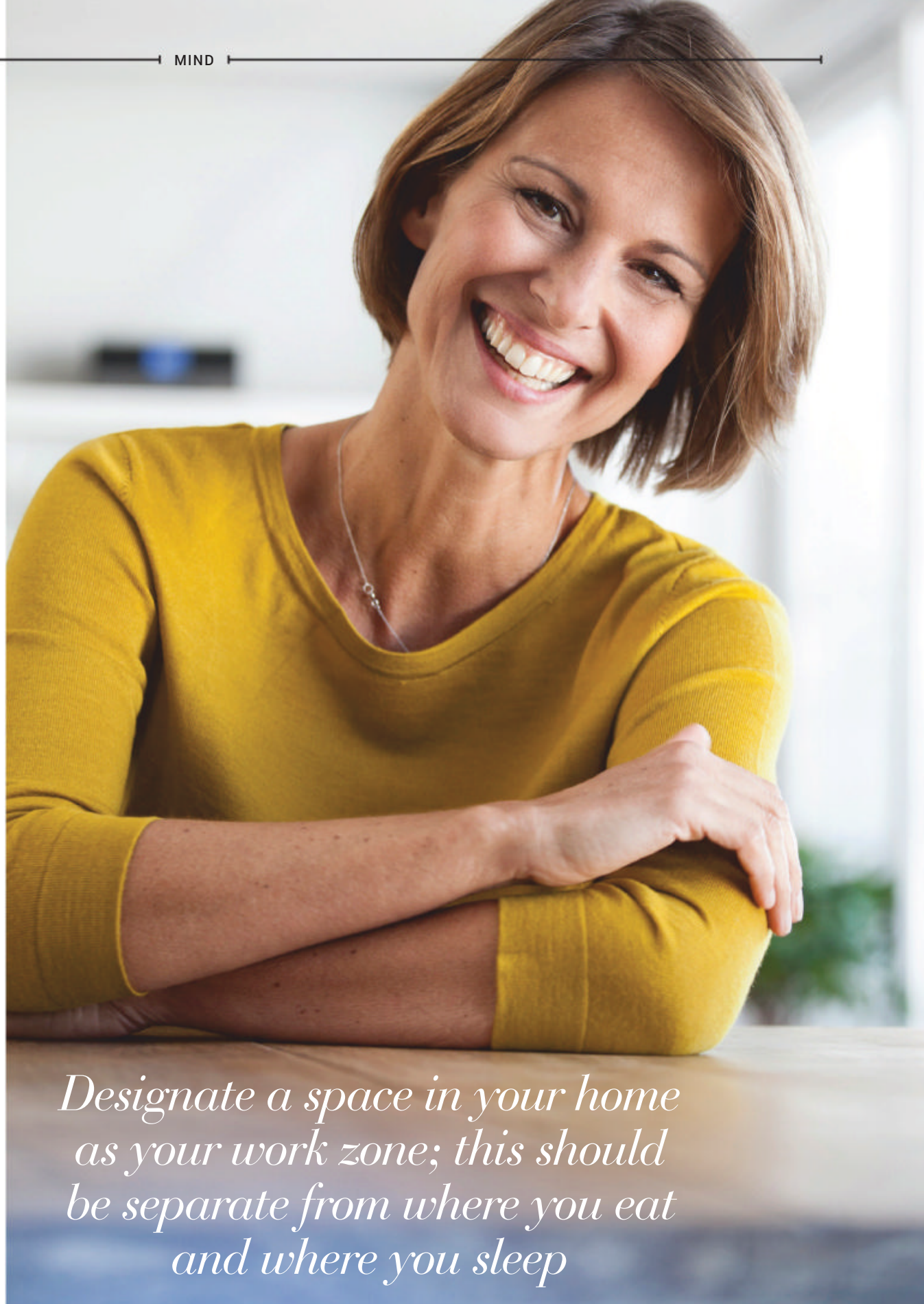
STRESS CULPRIT***Working from home***

The ripple effects of the Covid-19 pandemic left many of us feeling a lack of control. The sense of uncertainty in the air, financial constraints, health concerns and in some cases the after-effects of bereavement have contributed to a rising level of stress; in fact, a whopping 25 million of people in the United Kingdom admitted drowning in anxiety throughout the first lockdown according to a report by the Office of National Statistics.

Many of us have had to re-think the way we work, which has brought its own unique challenges. While there's no intimidating board meetings or lengthy commute to contend with, for many of us working from home has meant juggling our day-to-day work schedules with home schooling and caring for others, while coping with the pressure of remaining productive and meeting expectations that might not always be realistic given our personal circumstances. When you add all of these stressors up, there's a risk of burnout. Dwindling energy levels can rapidly turn into exhaustion, and before we know it, we get stuck in a rut.

STRESS-SOOTHING PLAN:

A lot of companies are reassessing the need for offices in the wake of lockdown, and extended working from home can take a toll on our health – especially when the lines between work



Designate a space in your home as your work zone; this should be separate from where you eat and where you sleep



and personal life are so blurred, so striving for a good work-life balance is super-important. This means sticking to a clear schedule which marks the beginning of the working day, as well as the end – avoiding replying to emails or finishing a work project when you should officially be 'out of the office'.

Designate a space in your home as your dedicated work zone; this should be separate from where you eat and where you sleep. Your diet also plays a crucial role when you're working from home. It can be tempting to reach for snacks around the clock, but this will just leave you feeling lethargic and

sluggish. Having a strict working day where you start work at, say, 9am and finish at 5pm will allow you to slot in three regular meals, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon snack. Breakfast is the most crucial consideration here, as smart eating in the morning will set up your energy levels and your mood for the entire day. A protein and complex carbohydrate-based breakfast, such as oats with seeds and berries or poached eggs on wholemeal toast, helps to keep your blood sugar levels even so that you don't run on empty. Instead you'll have improved concentration and memory.

STRESS CULPRIT *Over training*

It goes without saying that regular exercise is vital for our mental and physical health, and the rush of endorphins when we get moving massively improves our feel-good factor, which is something that most of us need now more than ever. On the flip side, however, too much rigorous exercise can have an array adverse health effects.

Prolonged high-intensity exercise without adequate rest time in between sessions can throw your body out of kilter, resulting in excess cortisol and higher levels of inflammation, impacting everything from immunity to overall energy levels. "This is known as over training syndrome, and signs to look out for include decreased performance, increased perceived effort, prolonged muscle soreness and fatigue after exercise, recurrent injury or illness, sleep disturbance, irritability and low mood," highlights Dr Oluwajana.

STRESS-SOOTHING PLAN:

Paying close attention to your body's needs is the best way to effectively manage exercise-induced stress.

"The over-training threshold is different for everyone so you need to pay attention to how your body is coping, while ensuring that you are getting adequate sleep, water and nutrients," Dr Oluwajana highlights.

You might need to mix up your workouts, weaving in high-intensity runs with rolling out your yoga mat or going for long walks to mindfully engage in the present moment and reduce stress.

Diet is a keystone of your body's health, too. Include more immunity-boosting foods in your diet. These include vitamin C-rich orange and grapefruit, which contain special flavonoid compounds to help increase immune system activity, and zinc-packed pumpkin seeds and shellfish to help reduce any inflammation in your cells.



Embrace mindfulness

Engaging in mindful exercises such as meditation can help you tackle stress and re-frame your mind so you can better deal with it in the future. It only takes a few minutes so give it a try!



STRESS CULPRIT *Micromanaging your diet*

You might count calories in a bid to see the number on the scales drop, but constant dieting can lead to emotional and physical stress. The chronic stress of yo-yo dieting can ignite flight-or-fight mode, leading to anxiety and irritability. "You'll be lacking in vital nutrients and a nutrient-deficient diet can pose a form of stress on the body. Chronic stress can impair the absorption and deplete stores of essential vitamins, potentially leading to deficiencies," explains Dr Oluwajana.

STRESS-SOOTHING PLAN:

If you're not eating enough, you'll have reduced levels of important nutrients and lower levels of neurotransmitters. To ensure you're getting enough nutrients, fill half your plate with a variety of veg (peppers, spinach, broccoli), a quarter of your plate with lean protein (chicken, tofu or legumes), and the rest with complex carbohydrates (such as wholegrain rice or sweet potato), and healthy fats such as olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds. This ensures you're getting a range of nutrients to sustain energy and mood without having to rely on restrictive and potentially stressful calorie counting.



SUPERFOODS *OR SUPERFADS?*

Separating the health from the hype: just how nutritious are some of the world's most celebrated food heroes?

WORDS: JACQUELINE SNOWDEN, IMAGES: GETTY IMAGES



+

They may not work miracles, but you should definitely enjoy superfoods as part of a balanced diet

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a ‘superfood’ is “a food that is rich in compounds considered beneficial to a person’s health”. By this definition, almost any fresh food can be considered a superfood – if only potatoes had the same PR as avocados.

Of course, it’s always exciting to try new foods and learn how they can be doing us good from the inside out. While many so-called superfoods do have brilliant health benefits, the hype surrounding them is the result of clever marketing. The word ‘superfood’ itself has no scientific definition.

Behind the headlines

A lot of headline-grabbing claims are often the result of laboratory tests on animals (or sometimes just a bundle of cells in a dish or test tube) and the compounds they use may be hundreds or thousands of times more potent than what we’d actually eat. There’s a big, unsubstantiated leap between an isolated chemical damaging cancerous cells in a test tube to the headline “Superfood Cures Cancer” – but sensationalizing the story sells papers and gets clicks.

Large-scale studies of the diets of real people eating real food (not just super-concentrated supplements) over a long period of

time are the best indicators of just how beneficial a food really is. With growing interest in the idea of food as medicine, hopefully we will see many more studies unravelling the intricate links between specific foods and their effects on our long-term health.

Check your ingredients

It’s always worth doing your research to see if you can get just as much nutrition from a more humdrum (and often cheaper) food. For example, super-trendy goji berries are touted as being higher in vitamin C than oranges, but so are kiwi fruits! Bananas are widely known as being a great source of potassium, but a plain old potato (with the skin on) contains twice as much.

One thing that has been proven by study after study is that a balanced diet featuring plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables (and a lot less processed foods) is key to a healthy life. It’s better to enjoy a wide variety of produce rather than pin your health hopes on a few select miracle foods.

If you’re looking to branch out of your culinary comfort zone and “eat the rainbow”, we will demonstrate a number of the delicious and nutritious so-called superfoods that will make a welcome addition to your diet...



Avoid combining berries with dairy – milk proteins may prevent berries' beneficial anthocyanins from being absorbed

Berries

SMALL, SWEET AND SHARP: WHY BERRIES MAKE AN IDEAL HEALTH BOOSTING SNACK

Berries are some of the best fruits to incorporate into your five-a-day. Compared to other fruits, they are relatively low-sugar and contain good levels of fiber, which helps slow the release of sugar into the bloodstream. Enjoying a regular snack of berries in your day-to-day diet has been linked to better weight management, improved cardiovascular health, and may

even reduce the symptoms of depression and age-related cognitive decline.

It's not just trendy acai and goji berries that are superfoods, though. The humble blackcurrant contains more anthocyanins than the more fashionable blueberries, and around 37 times more vitamin C to boot!

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Nuts & seeds

THESE SMALL AND MIGHTY SNACKS
PACK A NUTRITIONAL PUNCH

Nuts and seeds are packed with healthy unsaturated fats, protein, vitamins and minerals. Brazil nuts, for example, are a fantastic source of selenium (important for thyroid function), pistachios are rich in vitamin B6 (helps regulate hormones), while sunflower seeds contain lots of vitamin E (great for the skin).

Try to incorporate a selection of different nuts and seeds into your diet to get the most out of their unique benefits. Snack on plain rather than salted or honey-roasted varieties – you can always sprinkle them with your own spice mixes to add flavour without excess salt and sugar.

+

Just 30 grams
(1 ounce) of nuts and
seeds a day will add
plenty of valuable
nutrients to your diet



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Legumes

WHY YOU SHOULD GET MORE OF YOUR PROTEIN
FROM THESE PODS AND SEEDS

The legume family, or pulses – such as beans, lentils and peas – are an excellent source of plant protein. It's not only vegetarians and vegans who benefit from eating more protein from plant sources: regularly swapping your usual portions of red meat for low-fat legumes can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes and obesity.

These power-pulses are also high in fibre, and the combination of protein and fibre can help keep you feeling fuller for longer. What's more, they are a good source of vital nutrients like calcium, potassium, zinc, B vitamins and various antioxidants.

+

Dried pulses are often cheaper, but tinned ones are pre-soaked so they can be cooked much faster



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Cruciferous vegetables

MEET THE CANCER-FIGHTING MEMBERS
OF THE CABBAGE FAMILY

While kale hogs the superfood spotlight, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts may not spring to mind when you think of health food. But they are all members of the cabbage or cruciferous family. Per calorie, they contain higher levels of vitamins A, C, E and K than most other veg. They also contain compounds called glucosinolates, which (in laboratory studies) have been found to prevent cancer cell multiplication and neutralize harmful free radicals. More research is needed to see whether these amazing benefits occur in our bodies too, but studies indicate that people whose diets contain more cruciferous vegetables do have a statistically lower risk of developing certain cancers.

+

Cruciferous veg, including cabbages, broccoli, radishes and turnips, contain beneficial prebiotics that feed your gut friendly bacteria



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES



Beetroot's rich purple hue comes from betalains rather than anthocyanins, but the compounds have similar benefits

Red, pink & purple produce

GIVE YOUR DIET AN INJECTION OF COLOR TO GET AN ANTIOXIDANT BOOST

Most fruit and vegetables that are deep red, pink and purple get their colour from pigments called anthocyanins. These pigments are antioxidants which help protect our bodies from the effects of free radicals – naturally occurring particles that can cause damage to our DNA and cells.

Look for vibrant purples and reddish tones when shopping to identify different sources, such as cherries, blackcurrants, blueberries, red cabbage, pomegranate seeds and cranberries. Also look out for purple varieties of other veg, like potatoes and carrots, as they'll contain more antioxidants than their more common relatives. Remember, the benefits are in the pigmented parts of the plant, so enjoy your aubergines with the skin on!



Leave chopped
garlic 10-15
minutes before
cooking to
retain more
beneficial
compounds

Alliums

A FLAVORSOME FAMILY OF VEGETABLES THAT
UNLEASH THE SUPERPOWERS OF SULPHUR

The allium family includes onions, garlic, leeks, chives and shallots. Not only do these foods add punchy flavor to our favorite dishes, they also contain many chemicals that are beneficial to our health. Organosulfur (sulfur-containing) compounds help to lower cholesterol and blood pressure, while phytochemicals support the immune system and act as anti-inflammatories. Some studies also suggest that garlic and onions in particular may be anti-fungal, antibacterial and antiviral. They also contain prebiotic fiber, which feeds the good bacteria in our guts.

The downside? The beneficial sulfur-based compounds are also responsible for the dreaded garlic breath – arguably a small price to pay!



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES



Sweet potatoes

A SWEET, STARCHY ROOT FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH VITAL VITAMINS

Despite its name, the sweet potato is not closely related to the common potato. This root is full of fibre, vitamin C, calcium, vitamin K, iron, B vitamins and carotenes, the antioxidant compounds that gives it its orange color. Carotenes convert to vitamin A in our bodies (which benefits your eyes and immune system) and a single sweet potato provides around 400% of your daily recommended intake. That's more than any other root vegetable!

Orange varieties are the most common, but if you can find purple ones they can contain a whopping 300 times more health-boosting compounds. Don't bother peeling them, as lots of their nutrients are present in the skin.

+

Unlike regular potatoes, sweet potatoes count towards your five-a-day. Around 80g/2.8oz counts as one portion

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Oily fish

THE NUTRITIOUS PROTEIN SOURCE
HELPING TO PROTECT HEARTS AND MINDS

Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel and herring contain oil throughout their bodies (unlike white fish, whose oils are concentrated in their livers). They are a fantastic source of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids which perform a huge range of important roles in the body, particularly in maintaining healthy brain and heart function.

There is some limited evidence to support oily fish's reputation as a 'brain food', but a few pieces of salmon won't turn you into Einstein overnight. One study found that older adults who had at least one seafood meal per week performed better in thinking skills tests.



It is recommended that we aim to have 2-3 portions of fish each week, with at least one being oily



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Eggs

IN TERMS OF NUTRITION AND VERSATILITY, FEW INDIVIDUAL FOODS CAN BEAT A GOOD EGG

Eggs are seen as a superfood because they are a 'complete' source of protein – meaning they contain all nine essential amino acids that our bodies can't make on their own. What's more, they have many other vital nutrients such as selenium, B vitamins and vitamin D.

In the past, there were concerns that overindulging in eggs could raise cholesterol levels due to the cholesterol content of the yolks. But as part of a healthy diet there is no reason to limit yourself to egg white omelettes all the time – the yolks contain high levels of the important fat-soluble vitamins A, E and K.



A large-scale study in China found that an egg a day can reduce the risk of heart disease



IMAGE ½ UNSPLASH/JAKUB KAPUSNAK



Green tea

CHOOSE GREEN OVER BLACK TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DAILY BREW

Green tea has an enviable reputation as a health food, but not all claims are backed up by scientific evidence. Experiments have found no substantial links between green tea and the prevention of cancer, nor is it some kind of magical fat-burning weight-loss tonic.

It does, however, help to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke – a benefit thought to be linked to anti-inflammatory antioxidants called catechins. These compounds are present in black tea as well, but green tea contains up to ten times as much. Also, popping a slice of lemon in your tea may improve the proportion of catechins your body absorbs by up to five times.

+

One study found that antibacterial compounds in green tea make it an effective mouthwash (plus you can safely swallow it!)

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES



+

Probiotic
yogurts and kefir
can help restore
the natural
balance of your
friendly gut
bacteria

Kefir & yogurt

GIVE YOUR GUT BACTERIA A HELPING HAND
WITH THESE DELICIOUS DAIRY PRODUCTS

Recent scientific studies are revealing the influence our gut bacteria have on our overall health. An imbalance of gut bacteria has even been linked to neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease and depression. You can help keep your good bacteria thriving by feeding them probiotics like yogurt and kefir (a fermented milk drink). Look for products that contain live cultures, which are strains of gut-friendly microbes. Adding these beneficial bacteria to your diet can help improve symptoms of digestive disorders, too, such as IBS and Crohn's disease.

Like other dairy products, both yogurt and kefir are also great sources of calcium, which helps maintain strong bones.

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Olive oil

THE NOT-SO-SECRET INGREDIENT BEHIND THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET'S SUCCESS

Olive oil is one of the most widely used ingredients in the world, but this store-cupboard staple has demonstrated and time again to have health-boosting benefits. It's rich in monounsaturated fats, which help to reduce levels of harmful LDL cholesterol in the blood, and omega-3 fatty acids, which can help reduce high blood pressure. Extra virgin olive oil in particular has anti-inflammatory effects – one study found that 3.5 tablespoons of the oil was equivalent to 200 milligrams of ibuprofen.

It's not just our physical health that olive oil can improve either. One study found that people whose diets contain more olive oil have a lower risk of depression.



Olive oil contains many powerful antioxidants which help protect the body from cell and DNA damage





Choose fresh ginger over dried where possible – it contains higher levels of beneficial gingerol

Ginger

THE RESTORATIVE PROPERTIES OF GINGER HAVE BEEN REVERED FOR CENTURIES

This spicy, aromatic root has been used as both food and medicine since ancient times. The fresh root contains compounds called gingerols which have anti-inflammatory effects similar to ibuprofen. Ginger teas have been used to soothe nausea and mild digestive issues such as stomach aches, indigestion and motion sickness. There is also some evidence to suggest eating a few grams of the fresh root after exercise can reduce the intensity of delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS).

In the kitchen, ginger is a highly versatile ingredient which can be enjoyed in both sweet and savoury dishes in its fresh, dried, powdered, stem, crystallized or pickled form.



IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Turmeric

DISCOVER THE HEALTH BOOSTING
BENEFITS OF THIS STORE CUPBOARD SPICE

The vibrant spice turmeric has been used to bring a warm, earthy flavor and rich golden color to dishes for thousands of years. It's becoming more popular recently as scientists are uncovering its many beneficial effects on our health. The pigment that gives turmeric its glorious color, curcumin, has been found to have anti-inflammatory properties and antioxidant effects. More research is required to see how much benefit we get from the usual half to one teaspoon of turmeric traditionally used in cooking, though. One health hack is to use black pepper and turmeric together when cooking – the compound piperine in pepper helps our bodies absorb curcumin better.



Curcumin was
found to relieve
inflammation
and pain in
arthritis patients
better than a
placebo

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES



Outside the kitchen, some compounds found in mushrooms are being investigated as potential treatments for cancer and dementia

Mushrooms

THE HUMBLE EDIBLE FUNGI PROVES THAT LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING

In terms of nutrition, mushrooms are often overlooked in favour of brighter, more colourful foods, but they are full of beneficial compounds. In particular, four of the nutrients found in mushrooms (selenium, vitamin D, glutathione and ergothioneine) are important antioxidants that may be linked to healthy aging. These fabulous fungi are also a rich source of protein, fibre, B vitamins and beta-glucans (sugars that support the immune system). What's more, they are low-calorie, low-fat and low-sugar.

Mushrooms benefit from shorter cooking times as they retain more of their nutrients. Grilling or microwaving them (rather than boiling or frying) has been found to increase their antioxidant levels.

IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Avocado

THIS HEALTH FOOD SUPERSTAR HAS NUTRITIONAL SUBSTANCE BEHIND ITS INSTA-WORTHY STYLE



Avocados contain carotenoids, compounds which help keep your eyes healthy

It's held superfood status for years, but there is logic behind the recent trend of avocado worship. The creamy, buttery flesh of avocado is rich in unsaturated fats which can help lower levels of bad cholesterol. It also contains more soluble fiber than any other fruit, and is high in potassium, magnesium and vitamins C and B6.

As it's relatively high-calorie, it's recommended to limit yourself to half an avocado per meal, and no more than a whole per day. The unique texture means it can be enjoyed sliced or grilled in salads, or blended into creamy sauces and delicious smoothies.



EAT WELL *FEEL GREAT*

This selection of sumptuous meals should spark some creativity in your recipe book



One of the key parts of adopting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is making sure you're eating well. Choosing the right foods and learning new recipes can be a daunting task, however, so we're going to help you out by providing a selection of mouthwatering meals that should spark some culinary inspiration.

Over the next pages, you'll find an array of recipes for meals that are 200, 300 and 400 calories or under. From salads perfect for a quick lunch bite to larger evening showstoppers, there is something for every meal of the day here. And once you get more comfortable with planning your food out, you should try branching out and adding more meals to your recipe book to keep things interesting.

We get it. Finding the time to prepare, cook and even eat your own food can be a pain if you live a hyper-busy lifestyle, but setting some time aside to make a nutritious and healthy meal can offer a much-needed mental break from your schedule. Cooking encourages creativity, and focusing on a task that offers a delicious reward is a lot more gratifying than picking up a pre-made meal from a supermarket shelf. So why not give it a go?

Thai beef salad

LOW
FAT

LOW
SAT FAT

DAIRY
FREE

HIGH
PROTEIN

LOW
CARB

Serves 4.

Ready in 15 mins

- Finely grated zest and juice of 2 limes, plus extra lime halves, to serve
- 1 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce
- 2 x 200 g | 7 oz sirloin or rump steaks, trimmed of fat
- 2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 2 cm piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 tsp light muscovado sugar
- 1 bok choy, leaves separated and large stems sliced
- Handful fresh mint leaves
- Handful beansprouts
- 6 baby plum tomatoes, halved
- 1 red chilli, sliced

Per serving 175 cals, 5 g fat (2 g sat fat), 7.5 g carbs

Method

1 Mix zest and juice of 1 lime with the soy sauce. Season with black pepper. Add steaks and turn to coat. Set aside.

2 For the dressing, mix together the remaining lime zest and juice, sweet chilli sauce, ginger and sugar.

3 Heat a griddle pan or large frying pan until hot. Add the steaks and cook for 2 mins each side for rare, or a little longer for medium. Remove from the pan and set aside.

4 Toss together the bok choy, mint, beansprouts, tomatoes and chilli. Slice steaks, add to salad and drizzle over dressing. Serve with extra lime.



Roast Med veg salad jar

LOW
FAT

LOW
SAT FAT

GLUTEN
FREE

VEG

LOW
CARB

Serves 1.

Ready in 25 mins, plus cooling

- 150 g | 5.2 oz | 1 ½ cups eggplant, cut into small chunks
- 150 g | 5.2 oz | 1 ½ cups zucchini, cut into small chunks
- ½ small red onion, chopped
- Few leaves fresh oregano or thyme
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- ½-1 tsp ras el hanout
- Few squirts spray oil
- Zest and juice of ½ lemon
- 2 handfuls baby spinach
- Fresh parsley
- 3 tbsp feta cheese, crumbled

Method

1 Heat the oven to 200°C, Gas 6. Toss together the eggplant, zucchini, onion, oregano or thyme, garlic, ras el hanout and season with salt and pepper. Spread out on to a lined baking tray and spray with the cooking oil. Roast for 15-20 mins, or until golden brown. Scatter over the lemon zest and add a squeeze of juice. Leave to cool.

2 Put the cooked vegetables into the base of a Kilner or large screw-top mason jar. Place the spinach leaves on top with the parsley leaves and crumbled feta or seeds. Cover and chill until ready to eat.

Per serving 170 cals, 8 g fat (5 g sat fat), 9 g carbs



Venison burger & chips

LOW
FATLOW
SAT FATHIGH
PROTEINGLUTEN
FREE**Serves 1.****Ready in 40 mins**

- 1 large Maris Piper potato
- PAM cooking spray

For the burgers

- 100 g | 3.5 oz venison steak, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp fat-free Greek yogurt
- 2 scallions
- 1 tsp freshly chopped thyme
- 6 baby plum tomatoes, halved
- 4 small pickles, sliced
- Sprigs fresh thyme, to garnish

Method

1 Set the oven to 200°C, Gas 6. Cut the potato into fries. Cook in boiling water for 5 mins, then drain well and spread them out on a baking

tray. Spray very lightly with oil. Bake in the center of the oven for 15 mins.

2 Meanwhile, place the venison, greek yogurt, scallions and thyme in a food processor and whizz until just blended. Shape into a pair of burgers and place them on a sheet of baking parchment.

3 Remove the baking tray with the chips from oven, turn them over and move to one side of tray. Place parchment with the burgers on the other side of it and bake for 15 mins. Serve immediately with the baby plum tomatoes and gherkins, garnished with some fresh thyme.

Per serving 285 cals, 2.5 g fat (1 g sat fat), 35 g carbs



Eggplant Parmigiana salad

GLUTEN
FREEHIGH
PROTEINLOW
CARB**Serves 2.****Ready in 15 mins**

- PAM Cooking Spray or any low-cal oil spray
- 1 eggplant, sliced
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- 1 ball light mozzarella, sliced
- 50 g | 1.8 oz arugula leaves
- 2 tbsp basil leaves
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Method

1 Heat a griddle pan or grill. Squirt the prepared eggplant, red pepper, onion and tomatoes with the oil spray and grill on both sides until lightly charred and cooked through.

2 Toss the grilled vegetables with the mozzarella slices, arugula, basil leaves and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper.

Per serving 260 cals, 14 g fat (9 g sat fat), 13 g carbs

Creamy salmon & zucchini spaghetti

LOW
SAT FATHIGH
PROTEIN**Serves 4.****Ready in 15 mins**

- 200 g | 7 oz spaghetti
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 200 g | 7 oz salmon fillet
- 4 zucchinis, coarsely grated
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 284 ml | 9.5 oz | 1 ⅓ cup buttermilk
- Small bunch basil leaves
- Juice of 1 lime or lemon

Method

1 Cook the spaghetti in a large pan of boiling salted water for 10 mins.

2 Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large pan, add the salmon and cook for 5 mins. Stir in the zucchinis and garlic. Cook for 3 mins until just softened. Drain spaghetti, reserving a cup of cooking water. Tip pasta into pan with the salmon and zucchini.

3 Pour on buttermilk and water, season generously, stir over a low heat and toss everything together to warm through. Add basil and lime or lemon juice, and serve.

Per serving 349 cals, 11 g fat
(2 g sat fat), 41 g carbs



Mixed steak grill

LOW
FAT

LOW
SAT FAT

HIGH
PROTEIN

GLUTEN
FREE

Serves 4.

Ready in 30 mins

- 4 sweet potatoes, peeled
- Low-cal cooking oil spray (eg. PAM)
- 4 portobello mushrooms
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 20 cherry tomatoes on the vine
- 4 x 125 g | 4.4 oz rump steaks, trimmed of fat
- Watercress, to garnish

Method

- 1 Heat oven to 220°C or Gas 7. Cut the sweet potatoes into chips.
- 2 Bake with 4 squirts of Frylight for 25 mins.

3 Arrange mushrooms in a roasting tin, season and top with garlic. Squirt each once with oil and add 1 tsp water to each. Add tomatoes to the tin. Bake at the same hot temperature for the last 10 mins.

4 Heat a griddle pan until sizzling, cook steaks for 4 mins each side and serve with the chips, mushrooms, tomatoes and watercress.

**Per serving 387 cals,
7 g fat (2.5 g sat fat),
43 g carbs**



All-day breakfast pancakes

LOW
SAT FAT

HIGH
PROTEIN

Serves 2.

Ready in 35 mins

- 90 g | 3.2 oz plain flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- Pinch salt
- 3 medium eggs
- 100 ml | 3.5 fl oz skim milk
- PAM cooking oil spray
- 2 back bacon rashers with fat trimmed off or Canadian bacon
- 100 g | 3.5 oz | 1 cup chestnut mushrooms
- 175 g | 6.2 oz | 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1-2 tbsp freshly shredded basil

Method

- 1 To make pancakes, tip the flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Break 1 egg into the milk and mix. Gradually whisk into the flour to give a smooth batter.
- 2 Heat a non-stick frying pan and spray lightly with oil. Drop 3-4 tsp of the mixture into the pan and spread out

to give rounds about 7 cm in diameter. Cook for 1-2 mins, then turn over and cook for 1-2 mins more, until lightly golden on both sides. Remove from the pan and cook the remaining mixture, keeping the first batch warm.

3 Spray oil in the pan and cook the bacon for 1-2 mins on both sides. Push to one side of the pan and add 1 spray of oil to the clear area. Add the mushrooms and cook for 1-2 mins. Add the tomatoes and cook until they start to soften, then stir in the basil and season.

4 Poach the remaining 2 eggs. Divide the pancakes between 2 plates and top each with a piece of bacon. Spoon on the tomato and mushroom mixture and top with a poached egg. Grind over a little black pepper and serve.

Per serving 387 cals, 13.5 g fat (4 g sat fat), 41 g carbs



Soy pork with soba noodles

LOW
FAT

LOW
SAT FAT

HIGH
PROTEIN

Serves 4.
Ready in 20 mins,
plus marinating

- 2 tsp five-spice paste or powder (available from superstores)
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp soy sauce, plus extra to serve
- 500 g | 17.6 oz pork tenderloin, cut into thick strips
- 30 g | 1 oz dried seaweed (such as Clearspring Japanese Sea Vegetable Salad)

- 200 g | 7 oz soba noodles
- 250 g | 8.8 oz Tenderstem broccoli, cut into short lengths
- Olive oil cooking spray

Method

- 1** Mix the five-spice paste, sesame oil and soy sauce. Add the pork and stir to coat. Cover and leave to marinate for 30 mins.
- 2** Soak the seaweed according to the pack instructions, drain. Cook the

noodles in a pan of boiling water following the packet instructions, adding the broccoli for the final 3 mins, until just tender. Drain well.

3 Heat a wok or large shallow pan, spray lightly with olive oil and add the pork and marinade. Stir-fry for 3-4 mins until cooked through. Add the noodles and broccoli and heat through. Serve topped with the seaweed and extra soy sauce.

Per serving 370 cals, 7 g fat
(2 g sat fat), 36 g carbs

Fall in LOVE *with* WALKING

No stress, no pain, no fitness angst. We know how to get you into the best ever stay-healthy regime – and keep you there!

It's a fact, walking is one of the best ways to keep you healthy – it dips your blood pressure, strengthens your bones, recovers your waistline, raises your spirits and, if you start out right, can spark a love affair with the simplest fitness regime on the planet.

"It's not where you start, it's where you finish" could be our walking mantra because starting slowly and loving it will embed it in your psyche, establish it as a habit and make it part of your routine – for good. Yes, a slow build is definitely better than a fast burnout, and it brings some welcome wellbeing benefits. So try our seven easy steps to walking success...

1 Go all stylish on us

Everyone can walk, right? Well, yes and no. Before you put one foot in front of the other, sort your style and you'll walk better and ache less, which will only encourage you to do more. Not sure how? Here are your style pointers...

- Keep posture upright but make sure that your neck and shoulders are relaxed.
- Bend your arms at the elbow, with hands lightly clenched as if you're holding an egg without breaking it.
- Pull in your abs and tuck in your rear but keep a natural arch in your back.
- Look straight ahead and not at the floor in front of you.
- Hit the ground with your heel, then roll through to your toe and push off from there.
- Swing bent arms slightly but not right across the body.

➤ Don't pump, puff and go at full pelt or your walking exercise will soon start feeling more like an unwanted chore, then a bore, and you'll eventually start dreading it unnecessarily. Instead, try walking steadily and easily enough to hold a breathy conversation for half and hour or more.

Wellbeing bonus Remember to suck in your abs by pulling your navel in and down and your pelvic floor up as you walk. This helps trim your tum and prevent back pain – result!

ALWAYS WARM UP...

with some slow walking – and cool down with the same. Throw in a few leg stretches to keep supple and ache-free.



2 Lighten up

As a walking newbie, your aim should be to walk for around 30 minutes a day, three or four times a week – easy in the summer but, come winter, this could be a deal-breaker when the mornings are dark and cold. Make your walk wantable by doing it when it's light – there's nothing to say you have to exercise first thing. Can't squeeze it in? Oh yes you can! Here's how...

- **30-minute** walk (perhaps with a dog?) early morning or midday.
- **15-minute** walk there and **15-minutes** back for a lunchtime sandwich.
- **15-minute** walk to meet a friend for coffee and **15-minutes** back.
- Make one **30-minute** walk or **two 15-minute** walks part of your daily commute.

Wellbeing bonus Walking in the daylight packs a double health whammy. Not only are you getting into the exercise groove, but just 15-20 minutes of sunlight on your skin can up your vitamin D intake, helping to lower blood pressure, rev the immune system and boost serotonin to help chase away the blues and give us a lift. Just remember to apply sunscreen!

Neat tip Push up your sleeves to expose more skin to those healthy rays.



3 Think a better walk

We've talked about outdoor meditation before – but we bet you didn't imagine it belonged in a fitness walking scenario. Wrong! Getting into it will hype walking enjoyment from day one – right now, power walking can wait – trust us you'll know when the time is right to make the switch. Not sure how? We can help you engage your senses....

➤ **As you walk** make an effort to feel the ground under your feet and how every muscle moves you forward.

➤ **Meet every sensation head on and savor it.** Light, sound, scenery and weather – give every one your full attention.

➤ **Say your mantra.** It can be anything but say something positive such as, "I feel relaxed; I'm having a great day; I love life." Repeat it as you step out.

➤ **Notice the flowers** or any plant, leaf or texture that looks interesting; really give it your total consideration. If chaotic thoughts get in the way, do your best to brush them aside. That's

right, it's just like meditating – the only difference is you're on the move.

➤ **Fully focus on what's around you** for 25 minutes of your walk, then for five, let real life ease back into your head and see how relaxed you feel.

Wellbeing bonus A really tuned-in walk will relax, calm and de-stress you. If angst returns, remember how you felt at the end of your walk. Try it for a few days to really get you into the whole walking vibe, or alternate with more dynamic walks when you need a shot of TLC. It can be done.

BODIES & BRAINS LOVE CHANGE!

So vary the pace, the mood and the route – it keeps you interested and does more for mind, body and spirit



4 Move to the music

Keep motivation at an all-time high with some awesome music downloaded onto your phone. Studies show that listening to music while you work out can increase endurance by as much as 15%, as it distracts the part of your brain that focuses on fatigue. The result? You do more with what feels like less effort – how inspiring is that?

Wellbeing bonus Exercising to music stimulates euphoria-inducing endorphins in the brain, the chemicals that boost your mood naturally and bring on a feeling of wellbeing. Just 10 minutes makes a difference, so think what 30 can do for you.



5 Keep your distance

Or rather set it before you disappear off into the horizon. We remember a wonderful bit of advice given to us by walking expert Joanna Hall, and that is: don't simply set off and walk as far as you possibly can – you'll be too exhausted to walk back and never do it again. Obvious again, but so easy to forget when you kick off a new regime. Need a steer? Try these walks and see how you fare...

- Set yourself a 20-minute walk and split it 50-50 there and back.
- Walk in a 20-30 minute crossover loop with your house at the center, then wherever you are, you're not far from home. If you want to push yourself a bit, do it twice – if you can.
- Walk for about 20 minutes then when you begin your return home, try shaving a minute off that outward journey time. Get your heart pounding a bit.

Wellbeing bonus That last little walk will up your cardio a little and help build stamina. Keep at it and keep shaving off the time.



6 Phone a friend

Ask them to walk with you. Walking with friends is sociable, spirit-lifting and increases safety. It's a great way to gauge your speed, too. How's that then? Well, talking of spills the beans...

- If you can chat easily, you're strolling, nice and relaxed with your happy hormones in play. It's cheery and a good way to get into walking.
- If conversation is tricky and keeping it going is making you puffed, then you're walking at

a medium pace and are getting a mild workout – a good balance between healthy and happy.

- Only managing a few snatched words? Then you're motoring and really giving yourself a workout. If you want to build stamina, get fit and lose weight, you need to keep up this pace. So smile, but don't chat.

Wellbeing bonus As you can see, every pace brings its own rewards so never fret about how much or how little you ramp it up. Whatever you achieve, it's all good stuff.

DON'T RUSH TO BUY SNEAKERS

If yours cradle your heel, lace to a snug fit, have a box toe with 1.25cm of room to let your toes wiggle and they're flexible and breathable – they'll do!

7 Be ambitious

So you're loving your walking, your style is right, you've lifted your spirits and you're feeling great. What next? Well, why not pump things up a little with some take-it-up-a-notch moves? Here's how...

- Up your walking to four or five times a week. No need to make it any longer, just do it more often.
- Throw in an incline – a steep street you usually avoid or somewhere with an uphill climb. Not whacked out? Then your stamina is really improving.
- Or maybe take a hike? Try a longer walk – maybe an hour or so – at the weekend with a group of friends to make it more fun.
- Go faster by adding one-minute bursts of speedier stepping throughout your walk. Get it by taking shorter, not longer, steps to cover ground more swiftly.

Wellbeing bonus If none of this is fazing you, maybe it's time to go up a gear and get into fitness walking or a charity walk. That way you'll keep fit and help a worthwhile cause too.





*Build lean muscle
while losing body
fat. It can help to
strengthen your
bones and reduce
your risk of injury*

Introduction to STRENGTH TRAINING

Get to grips with the basics of strength-focused fitness and learn the fundamentals of building up your body

Strength training is a form of exercise that is centered on building muscle, strength and endurance, usually through the use of weights and resistance.

It can be quite an intimidating journey to start on because when we think about training with weights, we often picture bulked-up men straining against a set of giant dumbbells. But anyone can take up strength training, and remember that everyone can go at their own pace (obviously, before you embark on any new exercise regime, lifestyle change or diet, you should always consult your doctor first). You probably shouldn't jump straight to the big weights, either. You can make amazing gains from bodyweight

exercises to begin with before adding more resistance.

After a few weeks of strength-focused training, you'll soon start building rock-solid abs, see some awesome gains and begin sculpting parts of your body that you never really thought about before. Using weights also keeps your body burning calories long after you leave the gym, so is great for people trying to lose some weight. This method of exercise will build lean muscle while losing body fat, it can help to strengthen your bones and reduce your risk of injury in general because you'll be stronger all over. Some studies have also revealed that many people feel more positive about their body after taking up strength training, plus it has

been found to boost mood and helps eliminate feelings of worthlessness.

If you are still uncertain about starting a strength training journey, Tommy Goodspeed, personal trainer at 180Gyms Bournemouth (www.180-strength.com) says, "Try it and see. It can be very addictive. You soon get into it and start striving to better your numbers from session to session, hitting more reps or heavier weights. Feeling like you are doing more or doing better week to week is a great feeling. One of the worst feelings is feeling like you are stuck spinning your wheels. Strength training provides you with the goals to chase and you can always get stronger!" You can find Tommy on Instagram @tommyymas.

Three benefits of strength training

Tommy Goodspeed, personal trainer at 180Gyms Bournemouth, shares what he sees are the main benefits of strength training

1 "You will build confidence. Getting stronger will make you feel more confident as you see the progress you make, physically and in terms of performance."

2 "Strength training encourages certain character traits, such as discipline, consistency and hard work. Developing these will carry over into other aspects of life."

3 "Strength training requires focus. This is great for those with high-stress lives ... clear your mind of the troubles and come back to them with a fresh perspective."



GETTING STARTED

The first steps of strength training are much easier than you might think...

If you want to take strength training seriously, we'd recommend approaching a personal trainer. If you are determined to go it alone, though, make sure you set a realistic starting point for your abilities and give yourself rational goals.

There are no rules on how often you should strength train or for how long, but it's important that you listen to your body and also let it recover. If you are feeling fatigued, we'd recommend calling it a day and at first leave at least a day between each session. Consider starting with a short and simple program that works out all muscle groups, as this will help to build a strong foundation for you to progress from.

As you increase weights and resistance, strength training can be dangerous if you aren't doing it correctly. If by rep two of 10 you are struggling, you need to use a lower weight. In a 10-rep set, you should start to struggle around rep eight or nine – if this is happening, then you have chosen a good weight. As you get stronger you'll be able to increase the weight.

Warming up before your session is extremely important, as it will mean that your muscles are less susceptible

to injury. A light jog to the gym might be enough, but you should always do some dynamic stretches to get your blood pumping and muscles warm.

Another important thing to focus on when you are training is form. Good form means that you'll get more from the moves that you are doing and avoid injuries. Before you start increasing weights, make sure your form is on point. Gyms are full of mirrors, so position yourself where you can see into one, or record yourself and watch the video back. Pay attention to your posture, make sure that you move with purpose and are using your muscles as opposed to momentum to drive the weights. Don't hold your breath while you are exerting yourself, either – exhale at the hardest part of the exercise to fuel the movement.

Although we want you to approach strength training with care and safety, you should also make sure that you are constantly challenging yourself and ensure that you have goals to aim for. Just don't overexert yourself. After six weeks or so, change up your routine and make it harder. Modify weight, amount or reps, choose new exercises or even change the order that you perform them.

Glossary

REPS Short for repetitions – reps are the number of times you complete a single exercise before taking a rest.

SETS Completing a specific number of reps of a single exercise is called a set.

SUPERSET During a superset, you perform two or more exercises back to back followed by a rest period.

MUSCLE ENDURANCE TRAINING This involves performing repeated contractions with muscles or muscle groups for an extended period of time.

MAXIMAL STRENGTH TRAINING The ability to exert force on an external object like a barbell-based exercise – this would usually be just one rep.

EXPLOSIVE POWER TRAINING Combines strength and speed to increase your power. The goal is to be able to move heavy weights very quickly.

Muscles explained

Learn about six key muscle groups and the exercises to work them

PECTORALIS MUSCLES Connects the front walls of the chest with the bones in the upper arms and shoulders. The pectoralis minor and pectoralis major are found on either side of the breast bone. The pectoralis major aids with abduction and depression of the arm as well as rotation. The pectoralis minor aids in drawing the shoulder downward and forward.

KEY EXERCISES
Chest press, press-up

BICEPS BRACHII
The biceps muscles are located in the front part of the upper arms and are connected to the arm bone. When contracted, the biceps pull up the forearms and rotate it outwards.

KEY EXERCISES
Biceps curls, chin up, inverted row

TRICEPS BRACHII

This is a large thick muscle in the dorsal part of the upper arm, and the main function of the tricep is the extension of the elbow joint.

KEY EXERCISES
Tricep dips, press-ups, tricep extensions, tricep pull-downs

ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

The abdominal muscles support the trunk, and together with your back muscles, keep your body stable and protect your spine. They allow movement and hold your organs in.

KEY EXERCISES
Plank, deadbug, crunch, mountain climber, leg raises

CALF MUSCLES

The calf muscles are extremely important for balance, posture and stability. They work to support your ankle and foot joint.

KEY EXERCISES
Standing calf raise, skipping, sprinting

GLUTES

These are a group of three muscles which make up the buttocks that help your body to stay upright; the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus. The maximus creates the shape of your butt and works when you raise your thigh, rotate your leg or thrust your hips forward.

KEY EXERCISES
Squats, lunges, glute bridges

Build strength

Master these basic moves to start improving your strength



Squat

Start with bodyweight squats until you are confident that your form is correct. Stand up straight with your legs hip-width apart, engage your stomach and glute muscles before lowering yourself down as if you were sitting in an invisible chair. Your hips should go backwards with your knees remaining over your feet. Hold your hands in front of your chest to help with balance. Straighten your legs up, squeezing your glutes as you do, and repeat. To build strength, hold a kettlebell or dumbbell to your chest as you perform this move – or squatting with a barbell will take this to the next level.



Lunge

Begin with bodyweight lunges until you are confident that your form is perfect. Start standing up straight and then step forward with one foot until your leg reaches a 90-degree angle. If you can, allow your back knee to brush the floor. Now push up through your front leg and return to the starting position and repeat either on the same leg or alternate. If you don't feel stable and are wobbling slightly, then try widening your stance. Take this move to the next level and build strength by adding in dumbbells or kettlebells – either hold one to your chest or one in each hand by your sides.



Deadlift

Here we'll talk you through a barbell deadlift. Put the lightest plates that you have onto a barbell to raise it off the floor. Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Position the bar so it is over the center of your feet when you look down. To find your hand position, run your thumbs down the outer part of your thighs until they touch the bar. Bend your knees so that your shins touch the bar. Lift your chest and straighten your lower back. Take the tension out of the bar, take a deep breath and stand with the weight. Hold, then return the bar to the floor by pushing your hips back and bending your knees.



Glute bridge

A glute bridge is, unsurprisingly, great at working your glute muscles. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Next, lift your hips off the ground until your knees, hips and shoulders are positioned in a straight line. Squeeze your glutes firmly at the top and keep your abs drawn in. Hold this pose for a couple of seconds and then gently return to the starting position. Now repeat. You can take this move to the next level by putting a resistance band around your legs above the knees and when you drive your hips upwards, push your knees outwards against the band simultaneously.



Renegade row

This move requires a pair of light dumbbells or kettlebells – start with a lower weight than you think to begin with. Get into a press-up position with a weight in each hand. Brace your whole body and raise one of the weights while supporting yourself on the other. Pull your elbow straight back and pause when the weight is alongside your torso. Return to the starting position and complete the move with the other arm, now repeat. Your hips should stay still. If they are moving too much, make sure your core is engaged and consider a lighter weight. If the full press-up position is too much, you can drop down to your knees.



Dumbbell clean and press

Start with two dumbbells on the floor and your feet hip-width apart. Hinge at your hips, pushing them back and bend your knees. Grip the dumbbells and draw shoulders back and down, push feet into the floor and squeeze abs and glutes. Extend hips and knees to get the dumbbells moving up. As they pass your knees, shrug shoulders, squeeze glutes and use the momentum to get them up in front. Thrust elbow forward so you catch the weights at shoulder level, bending your knees. Tuck tailbone in, brace core and press the weights up overhead. Reverse the motion.



DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

Sticking to a steady routine is key to working out. Here's what you should need to keep in mind

The most important part of any workout plan is to have a goal that you can work towards and a means of measuring your progress week by week. Try your best to pinpoint exactly what you want to achieve.

Before you get started, take pictures of your body – you don't need to show them to anyone, but they will help you to see changes and progress in your body. Measure the circumference of your chest, waist, hips, thighs, calves and upper arms – do this every week or two to monitor changes. Also, weigh yourself once a week.

Now think about what days you will commit to working out and decide on how to split them. If you are new to this kind of training, we'd advise planning to work out three days a week. It is also important that your workout program reflects your goals. Consider focusing on different muscles or groups on each workout; train your back and biceps one day, chest and triceps on another, then

Make a solid workout plan that you can follow

your legs and shoulders on the third. If you were planning on working out for more than three days in a week, consider a core-focused day as well as a cardio day where you don't push heavy weights.

Once you know how you'll split your workouts, it is critical to make a solid plan for each one that includes what exercises you'll do, and how many reps and sets you'll do as well as how much you'll rest between them.

Finally, you must also know how to progress. Make sure that you vary your workouts and make them incrementally more challenging. Consider increasing reps and/or sets as well as the weight that you're lifting.

Five rules of strength training

RULE 1 Warming up is

important You may not feel like you need to warm up, but as you progress and push weight and intensity up, your body will need a warm-up routine more than ever. Start each session with some dynamic stretching, a few bodyweight squats, lunges and walkouts to get started.

RULE 2 **Prioritize your hips** Not every move will come from your hips, but mastering the ability to generate explosive power through this area of your body is a key part of strength training and is transferable to pretty much everything you do with this type of exercise.

RULE 3 **Focus on form** If your form is off then there's just no point in doing the exercises. Take time before you start building up the weight that you are lifting to nail down the fundamentals of each move. Foot placement is critical with this.

RULE 4 Focus and be confident

If you go into a heavy lift with wandering focus or a lack of confidence, then you'll have just set yourself up for failure. Remain focused and believe in your abilities. A strong belief in yourself will come from building up your strength and mastering form.

RULE 5 Rest days are important

Once you are in the swing of things, you might feel like rest days are lazy and should be avoided. But this is wrong: they are absolutely crucial. Even if you don't feel tired, your muscles and bodies need at least one full day of rest a week.



Get to grips with **STRENGTH TRAINING** *equipment*

Take your workouts to the next level by utilizing essential exercise equipment

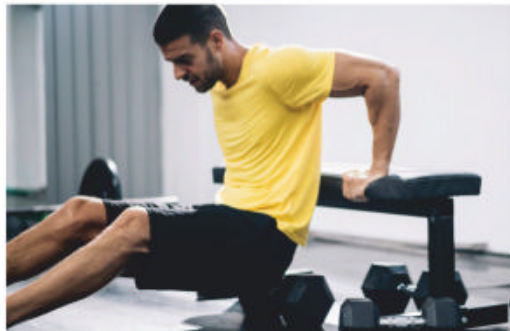
When it comes to strength training, you can only get so far before you need to start adding in weights and other equipment to progress.

Having a range of gear to hand will mean you can keep your workouts interesting by varying the moves and

routines that you do. The worst thing you can do is stick to the same set of exercises every workout because you won't be pushing your body in the way that you need to, plus you'll get bored and complacent.

So, with that in mind, let's take a look at some of the equipment you need to keep things interesting.

EXERCISE BENCH



This might seem basic, but having access to a proper exercise and weights bench will transform your training – an adjustable one is even better. A bench can adapt to a variety of training styles, and we'll talk you through a few exercises that you can do using the bench without other equipment. However, if you are going to start lifting weights seriously, then an adjustable bench will enable you to do a greater combination of exercises. The adaptability of the bench means that you'll be able to focus on specific areas of your body. From bench presses, one-arm dumbbell rows, reverse flies,

shoulder presses, reverse crunches, lateral bench hops, isolated biceps curls, skull crushers and decline push-ups, there's a huge range of exercises that you can do with this equipment.

HOW TO USE IT

Tricep dips

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Sit on the edge of the bench on the longest side. Place your hands either sides on your hips, legs straight out in front of you, fingers facing forwards and then, with control, lower yourself off the bench. Keep your elbows tight and pointing backwards. Now press yourself up and repeat without sitting back on the bench. If this is too hard, start with your legs bent.

Elevated press up

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Place your hands on the bench shoulder-width apart and get into a

press-up position. Now lower yourself so that your chest hovers one inch above the bench, press yourself back into the starting position and then repeat. Try holding yourself in the bottom position as long as possible, or lower yourself as slowly as you possibly can to change things up and make the exercise more challenging.

Rear foot elevated split squat

Try 3 sets of 20 reps (each leg)

Take two steps away from the bench, facing so that it is behind you. Rest the top of your foot on the bench behind you and lower yourself into a split squat. Make sure to drive your front knee outwards as you lower yourself. Drive through your front foot and stand back up tall. Repeat, then switch legs.

Great on it's own but even better when used with other equipment

MINI LOOP RESISTANCE BAND

Resistance bands come in a few different shapes, but first let's look at the mini loop resistance band. You can buy them in various resistances (often light, medium, heavy, extra heavy). The thicker bands are often made from latex but you can also get thicker fabric ones that are perfect for glute exercises. The great thing about all bands is that they are cost-effective and highly portable. They can be used to add resistance to glute bridges, squats, crab walks, hip abductions, lunges, lateral walks, glute kickbacks, plank jacks, lat pulls, overhead presses, single arm rows and more.

HOW TO USE IT

Glute bridge

Try 3 sets of 15 reps

Loop the resistance band around both legs just above your knees and lie on your back. Position your feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart, with your

knees bent at 90 degrees. Lift your toes off the floor and drive through your heels while you push your hips up as far as you can. Lower and repeat all while pushing your knees outwards against the band.

Side-lying hip abduction

Try 3 sets of 10 reps (each side)

Lie on your side with your hips and knees bent at 90 degrees. Put the loop around both legs above your knees and then raise your upper knee to pull your legs apart, keeping your feet together while contracting glutes. Return to the starting position and repeat. Make sure you do it on both sides.

Lateral walk

Try 6 sets of 10 steps in each direction

Place one resistance band round both of your legs above

your knees – if you have more than one band, pop another around your ankles. Lower yourself into a half-squat position while ensuring you are putting tension on the bands. Next, take a step to the side, maintaining tension on the bands constantly. Take 10-12 steps in one direction then change direction and repeat.

Good for working your glutes and excellent as a portable workout



POWER RESISTANCE BAND

Use of resistance bands were originally favored by physiotherapists to help with rehabilitation, but now they feature widely in everyday training workouts. Power resistance bands are the most adaptable type of bands out there and are perfect for adding external load to your exercises. For example, completing a press-up with the band attached around your upper back which will make the exercise significantly more challenging on the way up and down. Power bands can also be used for conditioning elements of training such as resistance sprints, bear crawls and other trunk-strengthening exercises.

HOW TO USE IT

Press-up

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Get into a plank position with your

arms extended, and drape the band around your upper back with each end under your hands. Lower yourself down as if doing a regular press-up, and then press yourself back up.

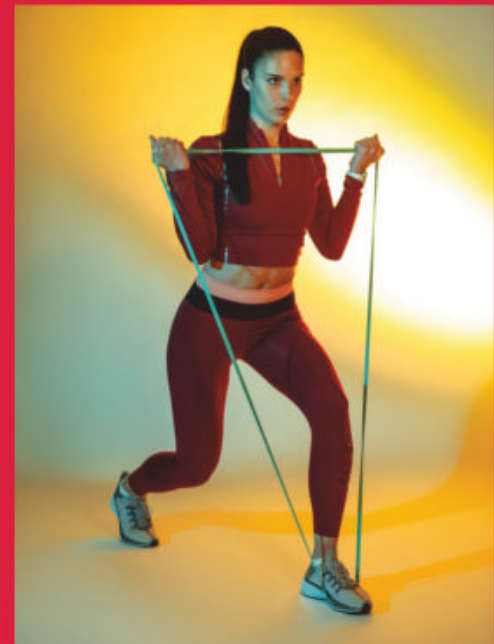
Squat of overhead press

Try 3 sets of 20 reps

Stand on the power resistance band with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold the other end of the band in both hands. Start with them at shoulder height with your palms facing upwards. Drop into a squat position then stand back up, extending your arms fully overhead as you do. Lower and then repeat.

Biceps curl

Try 3 sets of 10 reps (each side) Stand on the resistance band with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold the band in one hand starting with it down



at your side, palm facing forwards. Bend your arm at the elbow bringing your hand up towards your shoulder engaging your biceps and then slowly lower it back down, and then repeat.

Good for conditioning and portability

PULL-UP BAR



Build impressive upper-body muscle with a pull-up bar. Pull-ups can be very unforgiving, but the pull-up bar can work a large range of muscles depending on hand placement that just can't be replicated with any other piece of gym equipment. So don't give up if pull-ups are your Everest – you'll get there and feel amazing when you do. If you hold the bar with your palms facing away from you to pull up – you'll be predominantly working your triceps. However, if you opt for palms facing

you, then you'll mainly be working your biceps. A wider grip will put more emphasis on using your outer lats and a narrow grip focuses on lower lats. In order to pull your body upwards towards the bar, you'll be engaging your full core and varying the kinds of moves you do (static holds, pausing at the top, quick reps) will work your muscles thoroughly.

Even just hanging off the bar is a great place to start as it will help to stretch your muscle fibers and kickstart strength building.

HOW TO USE IT

Standard chin-up

Try 4 sets of 10 reps

Grab the bar with your palms facing you, hands shoulder-width apart. Next, pull yourself up until your chin is level with the bar and, with control,

lower yourself back down until your arms are fully extended. Now repeat.

Negative pull-ups

Try 3 sets of 6 reps

Start by standing on a bench or chair and grip the bar with your palms facing you, shoulder-width apart. With control, step off the bench and lower yourself as slowly as you can – aim to take 10+ seconds to lower yourself fully. Release the bar then repeat the process.

Hanging leg raises

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Hold the bar with your palms facing you and make sure your feet clear the floor with your arms fully extended. Hang on the bar, engage your core, bend at the hips and lift your legs – keeping them straight – until they are parallel with the floor. Lower them with control and then repeat. Bend your knees if you need to make it easier

Great for core and upper body strength

DUMBBELLS

If dumbbells aren't part of your workout routine, then you are doing something wrong and are missing out on a whole host of strengthening exercises. They are a fundamental part of upper-body strength training and are also an easy way to add weight into your lower-body exercises, too. You can get dumbbells in a wide range of weights from 0.5lbs all the way up to 50+lbs, and if you don't know what a dumbbell is, it is literally a short bar with a weight at either end. They come using a variety of different materials but the premise is the same. If you are likely to favor heavier weights, dumbbells made from iron are most likely the best option as vinyl dumbbells in heavier weights can often be quite bulky.

With them, you can do basic isolated moves like biceps curls, triceps extensions, lateral raises and dumbbell bench presses. You can also do more dynamic and explosive exercises that work more muscles at once similar to the moves that you'd do with a kettlebell. They are great to hold for squats, lunges and dumbbell deadlifts, too – or pop one across your hips for some weighted glute bridges.

It's important that you don't jump straight to heavy weights and instead ease yourself in. It is also a good idea to have a range of weights at your disposal – you might be able to press 25lbs with ease but when it comes to the dreaded lateral raises, it's a different story. If something is really hurting, stop and decrease the weight. You'll soon work out what muscles and areas of your body are stronger than others and what moves you can start pushing the weight higher on.

With that in mind, once you master the moves and become stronger, don't just stick at the same weight – increase it in small increments with every few workouts to see real gains and progress in your strength training journey.

HOW TO USE THEM

Dumbbell shoulder press

Try 4 sets of 10 reps

Stand upright, or sit on an adjustable bench with your back supported, holding



a dumbbell in each hand. Hold the dumbbells level with your shoulders, arms slightly bent with your palms facing towards your body. Press the weights upwards and twist your arms so that your palms end up facing forward – extend your arms fully so that the weights are directly above your shoulders. Lower them to the starting position and then repeat.

Bent over row

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Stand with a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing your body. Your arms and legs should be shoulder-width apart with your knees slightly bent. Hinge at the hips at 45 degrees, brace your core, keep your back straight then pull the

weights straight upwards, pinching your shoulder blades and keeping your elbows pointing straight upwards. Lower and then repeat.

Lateral raise

Try 3 sets of 10 reps

Stand upright, or sit on an adjustable bench with your back supported, holding a dumbbell in each hand by your side, palms facing inwards. Keep your back straight and engage your core. Now lift the weights, until your arms are parallel with the floor – try to lead with your elbows and they should be slightly bent. Lower and then repeat.

Perfect for full-body workouts

BARBELL AND SQUAT RACK



If you really want to build on your strength, you should seriously consider using a barbell with weighted plates and a squat rack. This will enable you to squat with a bar and gradually build the weight that you can handle. You'll also be able to use the bar to deadlift, plus when combined with a bench, you'll be able to bench press along with a range of other exercises.

With this equipment, you'll be able to build your weight more than with dumbbells and kettlebells, but as you increase it's important that you don't train alone. Make sure you have

somebody close by to spot you and help if you get into trouble.

Barbells will vary, but the bar itself tends to weigh around 45lbs on its own before you add any extra weight to the ends. Make sure you know how much the bar itself weighs before you start adding more weights.

Exercises that you can do with a barbell include bent over rows, back squats, overhead presses, lunges, front squats, bench presses, deadlifts, power cleans and more.

HOW TO USE THEM

Squat with a barbell and rack

STEP ONE

Strip the bar of weight and decide on its positioning. Ensure that the bar is around shoulder height. If you are squatting alone (we wouldn't recommend that you do) make sure you have set the safety bar up.

STEP TWO

Grip the bar with your hands wider than shoulder-width apart - make sure that you have a central position. Keep grip tight and duck under the bar. The bar should sit on your upper back/shoulders, *and not your neck* – that's critically important. Engage core and pull/squeeze your shoulder blades back and towards your butt. Stand and take the bar off the rack.

STEP THREE

Step backwards and position your feet. It will vary from person to person – but *just* wider than shoulder-width with your toes pointed outwards should suit most. Make sure you are pressing through the middle of your foot. Now sit back and squat down (start with just five reps then rack the bar). Do this routine a few times with an empty bar before adding weight.

Ideal for a full-body workout

KETTLEBELL

The kettlebell is a versatile weight that you can use to perform a range of exercises across your entire body, making it essential kit for your home workout station or a frequent friend whenever you visit the gym. It is usually a cast iron or steel ball with a large handle on the top and they come in a range of different weights from 5lbs all the way up to 97lbs and beyond. Kettlebell exercises are often more explosive and dynamic, meaning fast lifts rather than the slower and controlled movements that you might be used to when using a set of dumbbells. Also in contrast to dumbbells, a kettlebell's center of mass extends beyond the hand, which helps with swinging movements.

The classic exercise that we often associate with a kettlebell will most likely be the classic kettlebell swing (which we will talk through in more detail on the right), however there are many other moves that you should consider adding into your strength training workouts. One of them is a

deadlift with high pull, where you pick the kettlebell up from the floor in the deadlift position, stand up then continue pulling the weight up your body to face height with your elbows pointing upwards, then with control, lower it, hinge at the hips and place it back on the floor and repeat. Other exercises you can do with a kettlebell include; single-arm rows, Russian twists, goblet squats, clean and press, racked squats, racked reverse lunges, snatches, overhead presses, Turkish get-ups, windmills and more.

HOW TO USE IT

Kettlebell swing

STEP ONE

Hold the kettlebell down in front of you by the handle. Stand with your feet hip-width apart. The power from this move comes from hinging and driving through the hips while engaging your glutes.

STEP TWO

Bend your knees slightly but mainly hinge at the hips, pull the kettlebell back

between your legs. Keep your arms straight throughout this move. Now drive your hips forward, straightening your back to send the kettlebell up to shoulder height.

STEP THREE

Next, let the kettlebell swing back through your legs and repeat. Avoid using your upper body too much – the power should be coming from your glute muscles and hamstrings. If your back hurts then try focusing on using your hips to generate the power needed to swing.

Versatile, and good for dynamic strengthening exercises



WEIGHTED MEDICINE BALL

This is probably quite far from your mind when you start thinking about essential strength training equipment, however the weighted medicine ball is probably one of the most inexpensive and effective pieces of equipment for building all-over body strength. They are great for working a wide range of muscle groups as well as adding resistance into your cardio and HIIT workouts.

In order to choose the correct weight for you, you should be able to lift the ball up over your head 10 times. After 10 reps, your arms should feel tired; if they don't, you need to go up a weight.

Exercises that you can do with a weighted medicine ball include Russian twist, reaching Romanian deadlift, rolling push-ups, thruster, wall ball, triceps extensions, overhead slams, weighted superman, wood choppers, lunge and twists, squat presses and throw, triceps push-ups and many more. Even just throwing it around (with care, mind) will work your muscles hard.

HOW TO USE IT

Reaching Romanian deadlift

Try 3 sets of 10 reps (each side)

Stand on your right leg with the ball in both hands, then bend your right knee slightly and hinge at the hips as you extend your left leg backwards. You can make this more challenging by extending your hands overhead. Your body should end up parallel to the floor, now with control, return to standing and then repeat.

Wall ball

Try 3 sets of 20 reps

You'll need a room with high ceilings for this one, or find a high wall outside. Simply stand a few steps back from the wall holding the medicine ball to your chest. Bend your knees slightly then power upwards and throw the ball at the surface as high as you can. If you can catch it, do that. If not, let it drop to the floor and repeat.



Squat, press and throw

Try 3 sets of 20 reps

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and hold the medicine ball to your chest. Lower into a squat position, going as low as you can manage, then

press through your heels to jump up and throw the ball straight up. Let the ball hit the floor, pick it back up, and then repeat the exercise.

An inexpensive full-body workout

The most important part of going to the gym is making a commitment to go regularly and actually sticking to it.

Master the GYM

Hit the gym for more focused and varied workouts that will leave you feeling physically and mentally strong

To really advance your strength training, going to a gym is a must. Partly because gym equipment is expensive, and once you start becoming stronger and fitter you'll need more equipment at your disposal, as well as access a wider range of weights.

You'll see in this feature we're predominantly looking at conditioning equipment that provides more cardio-focused workouts to complement your weight-focused strength training. Not many of us will have the space or money to equip our homes with state-of-the-art gym equipment, so finding a gym that you like is really the only option. If you are able to try a few gyms before making a commitment, then we'd recommend doing so. If you don't like a gym, you probably won't go. Plus, there are so

many different kinds of gym now, you are bound to find one that suits you.

Considering many of us have been working out at home during lockdown, going to a gym makes so much difference in comparison. Not just for your fitness levels, but also mental health and overall motivation. Having access to advice and encouragement as well as just chatting to other like-minded gymgoers makes your fitness journey so much more positive.

Tommy Goodspeed, personal trainer at 180Gyms (www.180-strength.com) in Bournemouth, says, "Training at home takes way more dedication and drive. Gyms provide you with an environment that encourages hard work with minimal disruptions. You are a product of your environment. Join a good gym with strong knowledgeable people and see how you transform as a result."





Your moves should always be: legs, arms, arms, legs.

ROWER WARM-UP

- + 100M ROW
- + 25 JUMPING JACKS
- + 200M ROW
- + 30 BODY-WEIGHT SQUATS
- + 30 JUMPING JACKS

Your heart rate should be up by now, and your body will be warm and ready for the main part of your strength workout.

INTERVAL ON A ROWER

Get your heart really pumping with this interval workout. Here we'll focus on three rowing paces: Base – something you could probably do for 20 minutes without stopping, Push – something you could do for three minutes without stopping, and Sprint – something you could do for 30 seconds or one minute without stopping.

- + 1 MINUTE AT BASE
- + 1 MINUTE AT PUSH
- + 1 MINUTE AT BASE
- + 30-SECOND SPRINT
- + 1 MINUTE RECOVERY
- + 1 MINUTE AT BASE
- + 2 MINUTE PUSH
- + 90-SECOND BASE
- + 1 MINUTE SPRINT
- + 1 MINUTE RECOVERY
- + 1 MINUTE BASE
- + 1 MINUTE PUSH
- + 1 MINUTE BASE
- + 1 MINUTE SPRINT

ROWING MACHINE

An often-overlooked piece of equipment, a rowing machine is actually more beneficial than you might think. Using a rowing machine will work around 86% of your muscles, giving you a full-body workout. This means that it will help your endurance while strengthening and toning your muscles, making it a great piece of equipment to mix in with your strength-focused routine. If you are using the rowing machine correctly, you'll be predominantly working your pecs, upper back, arms, abdominal muscles and obliques, but also quadriceps, calves and glutes. Because the rowing machine is low-impact, it is suitable for gymgoers of all levels, and is a really good alternative to running or using an elliptical machine. The rowing machine can give you a high-intensity workout without putting stress on your joints in the same way that running might, and you can easily control your pace and the resistance can be adjusted to suit your ability.

1 Set the resistance to what you would like it to be. Then, make sure the foot pads are adjusted to suit you and you fasten the strap around the middle of your foot.

2 Now lean forward and pull the handle towards yourself. It is important to be aware that bad form can lead to injury or strain. Avoid rounding your shoulders. If you feel lower back pain then it is likely that you are not engaging your ab muscles.

3 Start with your arms extended in front of you, knees bent. With your back straight and core engaged, push back with your legs, then lean back keeping your abs engaged and pull the handle towards your body.

4 Make sure you extend your legs before you pull the handle towards your middle. And ensure you are using your upper back and not your arms. Now extend your arms back towards the base and bend your knees into the starting position.

We'd recommend that you keep things fresh and use a rowing machine in a variety of ways. Just rowing for 10, 15 or 20 minutes is great, but to stop you from getting bored consider incorporating it into your HIIT workouts, or just as part of your warm-up routine.

ASSAULT BIKE

This piece of gym equipment is essentially a super-charged exercise bike, and when used right will make even the most avid of fitness fanatics break into a heavy sweat very quickly. Unlike the traditional exercise bike, the assault bike adds in an upper body element to really help you step up your workout. The handlebars move forward and backwards independently to each other like they would on an elliptical machine as your feet pedal normally. You can also change the resistance to suit your needs. Like the rowing machine, the assault bike is a low-impact exercise machine, so it is ideal if your ankles or knees aren't up to running long distances, or as rehabilitation after an injury. The Assault AirBike is also great for metabolic conditioning and increasing your aerobic capacity without losing strength.

1 Adjust the seat height and overall positioning so that you can comfortably reach both the pedals with a slight bend in your knee and the handlebars.

2 Now adjust the resistance to suit your ability. If it's your first time on the bike then start low, as you can always increase it if it's too easy.

3 Now it's time to get to work! Start pedaling and moving the handlebars at the same time. Once you are comfortable, pick up the pace and hit it hard!

Similar to the rowing machine, there isn't really a rule on when to tackle the assault bike. An intense session once a week between strength workouts will probably be enough. Try to increase

Don't underestimate how tough this bit of kit is, and don't feel down if you can't keep up pace for long. It will come with practice.

the resistance as you build endurance and increase the length of time you go on it, too – as with any exercise, don't aim for too much too soon as you won't achieve it and are more likely to give up. Set realistic goals and, most importantly, don't underestimate how tough the assault bike can really be.

To start building aerobic capability, try 30 seconds on as fast as you can, then 30 seconds rest, 10 times. It might not seem like much, but believe us when we say that 30 seconds on will feel like 60 or more!



SKIERG

Another amazing piece of equipment to add to your strength training routine is the SkiErg, as it will work your full body. It will help you to build strength and endurance by working the body in a rhythmic motion. Like the rower and assault bike, the SkiErg is also another low-impact exercise that you can adapt to your own abilities and has the potential to give you a high-calorie-burning workout. You can adjust the resistance on the machine, and also the harder you pull, the more resistance you'll feel, too. It predominantly works your upper body – you'll feel it on your lats, abs, arms, back and shoulders all at the same time. You will need to somewhat engage your lower half too, but it won't give you that 'leg day' burn.

1 Stand in front of the machine with your legs shoulder-width apart, and now grab hold of the handles so your arms are above your head with elbows slightly bent.

2 Pull the handles down in front of you, bend your knees and push your hips back as if you were cross-country skiing.

3 Pull your arms right down until your hands are right by your thighs and arms parallel with your torso.

4 Now, reverse the movement so your arms are back to the starting position and you are on your tiptoes. Immediately pull back down on the cables and repeat.

Once again, there's no hard and fast rule as to when you should do this exercise, just try to mix it in somewhere to complement your strength training. Your heart rate will go up after just a few seconds of using the SkiErg, so build up the length of time you use it for. Try setting yourself a target and time it, then work towards beating that time. Start with seeing how fast you can do 500m, once your time has started to improve, move the target to 1000m then 2000m. Or simply add short blasts of the SkiErg into your interval workouts.



Try the workout on the right...

- + 10 SQUAT JUMPS
- + 10 BURPEES
- + 10 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS (EACH LEG)
- + 20 JUMPING JACKS
- + 2 MINUTES FLAT OUT ON THE SKIERG
- + REPEAT THIS CIRCUIT 4 TIMES.

Don't hold your arms in the top position for long as you'll lose the resistance of the flywheel and lose rhythm.



CABLE MACHINE

This is a great piece of kit, but on first glance can look intimidating – especially when there's a huddle of 'gym bros' watching one another use it. The cable machine provides resistance in order to work the muscle you choose depending on the movement you do. The great thing is that it can be totally adjusted to suit your abilities. The cables are attached to weights and the whole thing works as a sort of pulley system. There are usually a wide range of attachments that will complement different moves and you can pull in any direction you want. You can be creative with the moves you do on this machine, but great ones to start with include tricep pull-downs, standing cable rows, bicep curls and standing chest presses.

1 To do a standing cable row, attach the rowing attachment to one of the cables (it will have two rigid handles).

Start with lower weights until you have mastered the moves.

2 Now set the weight you'd like to pull. Remember, as always, it's safer to start lower than you think until you know you have mastered the move.

3 Take hold of the attachment while facing the machine and take a few steps back. Keep a slight bend in the knees.

4 Keep your arms right out in front of you and step back until the weight unracks and then pull the weight using your arms towards the center of your chest. Your shoulder blades should be retracted during the motion.

You can do a whole range of different moves with the cable machine, so you are probably best to choose four or five different moves and then do three sets of 10 per exercise.

UPPER BODY WORKOUT

- + 3 SETS OF 10 STANDING SINGLE ARM CABLE ROW
- + 3 SETS OF 10 TRICEP ROPE PUSH DOWN
- + 3 SETS OF 10 BICEP CURL
- + 3 SETS OF 10 LATERAL RAISE
- + 3 SETS OF 10 CABLE CRUNCH

FULL-BODY WORKOUT

- + REST 30 SECONDS BETWEEN SETS
- + 3 SETS OF 15 CABLE SPLIT SQUAT
- + 3 SETS OF 15 CABLE PULL-THROUGH
- + 3 SETS OF 15 SEATED ROW
- + 3 SETS OF 10 STANDING SINGLE ARM CABLE ROW
- + 3 SETS OF 10 STANDING CABLE CRUNCH

ADVANCED

- + 4 SETS OF 10-15 PALLOF PRESS
- + 4 SETS OF 10-15 FACE PULL
- + 4 SETS OF 10 STANDING CABLE SQUAT ROW
- + 4 SETS OF 10 STANDING CABLE STEP UP
- + 4 SETS OF 10 PLANK WITH SINGLE-ARM CABLE ROW



The easiest way to beat anxiety surrounding the gym is to book an induction or ask for a few initial training sessions.

HOW TO BEAT GYM ANXIETY

Gyms can seem like scary places, but we promise they are not! Here's our tips to get you through the door...

If you're feeling really anxious about going to the gym, it's often mainly the fear of the unknown. Before you sign up for a membership, ask if you can be shown around the gym. We can't think of a gym that wouldn't do that for a prospective new member - and if even that initial meeting still fills you with dread, ask a mate to go with you, even if they aren't going to sign up. Most gyms do also enforce an induction for your first session, so make sure to book one and actually go. While you are on the induction, ask as many questions as you need. Ask what all the machines do and if you can try them in front of the trainer.

So, now you've had a tour of your new gym and been formally inducted you should be feeling pretty good about smashing your first workout, right? If

you're not, don't worry as this is totally normal. We've all felt the dread of doing something new and it's often worse if it's a solo pursuit. Before you go, make a plan of what you will do once you are there. Is it leg day? Or are you going to focus on upper body or just do a bit of cardio? Making a plan will help

We've all felt the dread of doing something new and it's often worse if it's a solo pursuit

to give you direction and purpose for when you get there and make you less likely to panic your way off-course. Don't forget, also, many gyms will happily help you to create a plan within the services that they offer, so if you do want extra guidance (or even a personal trainer), ask at your induction.

Finally, remember that it is likely that everyone in the gym has something that they are self-conscious about. Plus everyone has been the gym newbie at some stage. Most importantly, we're sorry to say, nobody is watching you. Everyone is there for a reason and that reason is not to watch you. You do all share one thing, however, you are all there for some form of self-improvement and that is such a beautiful thing. A room full of people just trying to be a little bit better. Embrace that and enjoy the experience.

Gym Etiquette

Make sure you don't get on the wrong side of trainers and other gymgoers with these dos and don'ts



DO

1 Ask for help if you need it. There's nothing more frustrating for trainers at the gym than watching people using equipment incorrectly. You might hurt yourself and you probably won't actually be getting the benefits you think.

2 Clean equipment after you use it. Even before a Covid world, it was best practice to wipe down equipment after you use it. There's nothing worse than sitting down on a sweaty seat.

3 Put equipment away. You might be doing a series of moves and require multiple pieces of equipment, but if you aren't using something, wipe it and put it back.

4 Stay off your phone. Try to limit your distractions wherever it is possible. You won't be totally focused on your workout if you are busy checking messages and notifications.

DON'T

1 Drop weights. Dropping weights can damage equipment and if they are free-weights, you'll have no control of where they'll fall when you do send them clattering to the floor. Broken toes and bruised shins are not desirable.

2 Hog a machine. If you're visiting a gym at peak hours, limit yourself to 15 minutes on a machine as there might be people waiting to use it. You can always go back to it later.

3 Stare at people. Even if you aren't self-conscious, other people in the gym might be. By all means chat to people if they want to engage but don't gawp at people as you might put them off.

4 Walk behind someone wielding a heavy weight. You should give most people a wide berth, but if you breeze past someone squatting with a heavy barbell, they could hurt you or themselves.

WHAT TO BRING

Fill your gym bag with a few essentials



Water bottle

Most gyms have water dispensers, but you'll need to take your own bottle to fill up.

It is so important to have a drink before a workout, and also to stay hydrated throughout. You'll have much more energy and your muscles will probably recover better.

Towel

We'd like to hope you'll be getting nice and sweaty while you are at the gym, so a towel is a good idea to wipe your dripping face. They are also handy to wipe your hands on if they are sweaty when you are trying to lift weights to help with grip.



Smart watch

Track the calories that you are burning and also keep your eye on your

heart rate when you work out. You only have one heart, so take care of it, and remember to ask your doctor for advice before upping your workouts and cardio – especially if you have a history of heart conditions.

Earphones

Sometimes the music in the gym is banging and you won't want to listen to your own music, but for times when you need full focus on your workouts, having your own headphones to hand



is a great idea. Or for when you don't need to hear Karen and Janice's work drama over on the static bikes.

Notebook and pen

This might feel like a strange one, but if you are taking your weight training seriously, then having the ability to record the weight and reps you are lifting is important. You can also just use it to write down your workout plan for the day to keep you on track.



BE STRONG *GET SLIM*

Want to boost strength and burn fat?
With Sam Eastwood's introduction to
weights workouts, you can do both





Don't be intimidated by the words 'strength training' advises celebrity personal trainer Sam Eastwood. Lifting bigger weights doesn't mean bigger muscles – women simply don't have enough testosterone in their bodies to bulk up in the same way men do. In fact, strength training is one of the best ways to lose weight and shift stubborn fat. More calories are used to make and maintain muscle, so workouts like these will boost your metabolism and help shift those pounds – even after your workout.

Whether you're lifting dumbbells or your own body weight, the benefits are endless. "It strengthens your heart, muscles, lungs and bones, improves your balance and melts away fat. Plus, it boosts your mood and increases energy levels," explains Sam.

Start low and see how you go



**YOUR
TRAINER,**
SAM
EASTWOOD

► In week 1, use your own body weight to perform the exercises, then add handheld weights for workouts 1 and 3 in weeks 2, 3 and 4. "Dumbbell weight varies depending on the person. Start low and see how you go," advises Sam. "Increase your reps before you increase weight," she adds.



WORKOUT 1

WORKOUT 2

WORKOUT 3

WEEK 1

- Outstretched arm circles x 15 both ways
Arms out at shoulder height, move in circles
- Alternate bicep curls x 15
Place elbows against rib cage, forearms at 90 degrees, draw arms to your chest and lower back down
- Shoulder girdle pump x 15
(See exercise 3 opposite)
- Alternate tricep lunges x 15
Forward lunge, lift arms up and behind you
- Ab jumps x 15
Like a burpee, but engage abs

- Skipping with a rope x 2 minutes
- Dancing plank x 15
(See exercise 1 opposite)
- Jumping squat x 15
Feet wide, squat down, jump up and push arms back
- Mountain climbers x 20
High-energy version of the dancing plank – jump to switch legs
- Corset twist x 20
(See exercise 6 opposite)
- Walking plank x 20
In plank, bend left arm so your forearm is lowered to floor, followed by right. Reverse move back up to plank
- Repeat x 2

- Downton Abbey x 10 each side
(See exercise 2 opposite)
- Side lunges x 10 each side
Step left leg out to side, bend knee (keep right leg straight), repeat with right leg
- Leg pulls x 10
(See exercise 4 opposite)
- 2nd position squat x 20
Place feet in 2nd position, squat down
- Forward lunge x 10 each side
Feet hip-width apart, step left leg forward, bend knees
Return to start and repeat on right
- 1st position heel raises x 20
(See exercise 5 opposite)

WEEK 2

- Repeat workout 1
Add 3lbs weights
Increase reps to 20

- Repeat workout 2, but set a timer to 12 minutes to complete each routine (24 minutes for 2)

- Repeat workout 3
Add 3lbs weights
Increase reps to 15 each side

WEEK 3

- Repeat workout 1
Add 3lbs weights
Increase reps to 25
Add in another set if you

- Repeat workout 2 x 3 and set timer to 8 minutes to complete each one

- » Repeat workout 3 x 2
Add 3lbs weights
Increase reps to 20 each side

WEEK 4

- Repeat workout 1
Add 5lbs weights
Increase reps to 25
Add in another set if you have time remaining

- Repeat workout 2 x 4 and set timer to 6 minutes to complete each one

- Repeat workout 3 x 3
Add 5lbs weights
Increase reps to 25 each side

YOUR 6 GET- STRONG MOVES

TIP
KEEP ELBOWS
SLIGHTLY BENT
THROUGHOUT.



1 Dancing Plank

Perform plank position. Pull right knee into your chest as far as you can (keeping back strong). Push it back down to starting plank position and repeat on your left side.

3 Shoulder Girdle Pump

Stand straight. Lift arms up in front of you to shoulder height. Bend arms to 90 degrees (palms facing you). Push shoulder blades down. Pulse arms up and down towards the ceiling, while moving them in a semi-circle until they're positioned to the sides of your body. Pulse back in and repeat.



TIP
MIX UP YOUR
STRENGTH
TRAINING WITH
SOME YOGA.



5 First Position Heel Raises

Place your heels together with your toes pointing out and squeeze your inner thighs together. Raise heels up so you're standing on the balls of your feet and lower back down. Pulse up and down, without letting the heels come apart.

2 Downton Abbey

Standing straight, lift your left leg up behind you, pointing your toe. Sweep it across and behind to the right, placing your pointed toe on the floor (like an extended curtsy). Bend both knees, lining the back knee up to the back of the front heel. Hinge your body down over your thigh. Go back to start position and repeat on the other side.



4 Leg Pulls

Stand straight, feet hip-width apart. Dive your upper body down and forward – keeping your back flat – so you're parallel with the floor and legs stay straight. Arms should be hanging down to the floor. Engage your back muscles to draw you back up to standing and repeat. Don't let your back curl!



TIP
START SLOWLY
TO AVOID
INJURY AND
SORENESS.

6 Corset Twist

Sit on the floor and bend your knees in front of you. Bend arms and press knuckles against your chest, pressed together. Keeping elbows pointing out to the sides, twist your whole body to one side and then to the other.



Time to TONE IT *UP*!

If there's one thing we swear by when it comes to burning fat and having a better body, it's strength training. With this plan, you can go from feeble to formidable in just 12 half-hour sessions



Does the thought of lifting heavy weights in the gym feel too intimidating? Never fear, our four-week program, created by celebrity personal trainer Scott Laidler, is designed to rapidly build strength at home using only your body and a pair of hand-held weights (5-10lbs) – and there's not a gym machine in sight!

What's more, you'll burn away fat, keep your blood sugar stable (the more muscle mass you have, the more efficiently your body burns glucose) and create a toned physique, as well as protecting yourself from diseases such as osteoporosis, diabetes and heart conditions.



**YOUR
TRAINER,**
SCOTT
LAIDLER

Are you set to get strong?



➤ Scott's moves are fairly demanding but straightforward, and we've included a guide for fitness fledglings. Three 30-minute sessions a week should see great results.

Before you start

Take these three tests now, then again at the end to measure how much your strength has increased. Aim to double your time.

➤ **Plank endurance** Time how long you can hold the plank position perfectly still for. This test will burn your core!

➤ **Squat** hold endurance See how long you can hold a bodyweight squat for.

➤ **Press-ups** Count how many press-ups (on your knees) you can do until you reach muscle failure. If you can do 20, nice work!

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
DAY ONE	Warm up 5 mins jog on the spot Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 12-15 reps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min x 2 Squat hold 1 min x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins jog on the spot	Warm up 5 mins jog on the spot Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 12-15 reps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min 15 seconds x 2 Squat hold 1 min 15 seconds x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins jog on the spot	Warm up 5 mins jog on the spot Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 10-12 reps (increase weight if possible) Press-ups (try normal) 1 min 30 secs x 2 Squat hold 1 min 30 secs x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins jog on the spot	Warm up 5 mins jog on the spot Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 8-10 reps (increase weight if possible) Press-ups (normal version) 2 mins x 2 Squat hold 2 mins x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins jog on the spot
DAY TWO	Warm up 5 mins doing star jumps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min x 2 Plank 1 min x 2 Lunges 3 sets of 8 reps on each leg Dumbbell deadlift 3 sets of 12-15 reps Cool down 3-5 mins doing star jumps	Warm up 5 mins doing star jumps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min 15 secs x 2 Plank 1 min 15 secs x 2 Lunges 3 sets of 8 reps on each leg Dumbbell deadlift 3 sets of 12-15 reps Cool down 3-5 mins doing star jumps	Warm up 5 mins doing star jumps Press-ups (try normal) 1 min 30 secs x 2 Plank 1 min 30 secs x 2 Lunges 3 sets of 10 reps on each leg Dumbbell deadlift 3 sets of 10-12 reps (increase weight if possible) Cool down 3-5 mins doing star jumps	Warm up 5 mins doing star jumps Press-ups (try normal) 2 mins x 2 Plank 2 mins x 2 Lunges 3 sets of 12 reps on each leg Dumbbell deadlift 3 sets of 8-10 reps (increase weight if possible) Cool down 3-5 mins doing star jumps
DAY THREE	Warm up 5 mins of skipping Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 12-15 reps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min x 2 Plank 1 min x 2 Squat hold 1 min x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins of skipping	Warm up 5 mins of skipping Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 12-15 reps Press-ups (knee version) 1 min 15 secs x 2 Plank 1 min 15 secs x 2 Squat hold 1 min 15 secs x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins of skipping	Warm up 5 mins of skipping Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 10-12 reps (increase weight if possible) Press-ups (try normal) 1 min 30 secs x 2 Plank 1 min 30 secs x 2 Squat hold 1 min 30 secs x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins of skipping	Warm up 5 mins of skipping Dumbbell shoulder press 3 sets of 8-10 reps (increase weight if possible) Press-ups (try normal) 2 mins x 2 Plank 2 mins x 2 Squat hold 2 mins x 2 Cool down 3-5 mins of skipping

WORDS: NATALIA LUBOMIRSKI, PHOTOS: ANNE-MARIE BICKERTON, GETTY, ALICIA CLARKE, T-MEDIACONTENT.COM. FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO SCOTTLAIDLER.COM

YOUR 6 TOTAL TONE-UP MOVES

1 Lunges

Stand with your hands on your hips. Step one foot in front of you and bend both legs so they form right angles. Pause for 3 seconds, then bring yourself back to the starting position and repeat with the other leg.

STRENGTHENS
YOUR HAMSTRINGS
AND GLUTES



3 Plank

Kneel down, lean forward and place your forearms on the floor, fingers facing forwards. Lift your body off the floor so you're supported by your forearms and your toes. Keep your body straight and control your breathing (in through your nose and out through your mouth).

BOLSTERS YOUR
CORE MUSCLES



WORKS
YOUR
GLUTES
AND
CALVES

WORKS QUADS

5 Squat holds

Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and stick your bottom out. Extend your arms out in front of you to help keep your balance. As you squat down, ensure your back is straight and your knees don't come over your toes. Hold for the allotted time and raise yourself back to the starting position.



HELPS DEVELOP
A STRONG UPPER BODY,
PARTICULARLY THE
SHOULDERS

2 Dumbbell shoulder press

Sit down on a chair with your back against the backrest and your feet placed firmly on the floor shoulder-width apart. Hold a pair of dumbbells in each hand, with your palms facing forwards at shoulder height. Lift the weights upwards and squeeze your shoulders in towards each other – your arms should be extended with a slight bend in your elbow. Slowly bring your arms down back to the starting position.

4 Press-ups (knee version)

Kneel on the floor, keeping your feet in the air and crossed at your ankles. Lean forward and place your hands on the ground at chest level, fingers facing forwards (they should be slightly wider than shoulder-width apart). Lower your body towards the floor, while keeping your back straight. When you are as low as you can go,

pause for 3
seconds, then
raise back up.



TARGETS THE
PECTORALS,
SHOULDERS AND LATS



DEVELOPS LOWER BODY
STRENGTH, WORKING
LOWER BACK

6 Dumbbell deadlift

Stand with your feet under your hips, holding a pair of dumbbells with arms hanging down in front of your body. Keeping your back straight, bend forwards at your hips and squat down so your dumbbells are just above your feet. Push through your heels to lift the weights and raise your body up, then tense your glutes.

DEVELOPS LOWER
BODY STRENGTH,
WORKING
HAMSTRINGS AND
BUTTOCKS

STRENGTH TRAINING *FOR YOUR Mind & Body*

FUTURE PLC

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **Drew Sleep**

Senior Designer **Lora Barnes**

Compiled by **Alice Pattillo & Andy Downes**

Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Editorial Director **Jon White**

Contributor

Rebecca Greig

Cover images

Getty Images

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited
or published under licence.

A360 MEDIA

President & Chief Media Officer

Doug Olson

Executive Vice President

Eric Szegda (Consumer Revenue)

Vice Presidents

Holly Oakes (Consumer Marketing)

Tom Maloney (Consumer Marketing & Sales)

Consumer Marketing Director

Melanie Pisell

Circulation Manager

Bill Fiakos

Published by A360 Media.

All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without
written permission of the publisher is prohibited.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Magazine SHOP

Find these
magazines and
many more
online!

www.magazineshop.us

FOOD & RECIPES

NUTRITION & DIET

SPECIAL EDITIONS

WOMEN'S INTEREST

ENTERTAINMENT

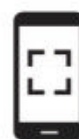
GAMES & PUZZLES



Order your favorites today!

Scan to shop!

Open your camera
app, focus on
this code, and
tap when the
url pops up!



LOVE YOURSELF INSIDE AND OUT



STRENGTH TRAINING FOR YOUR *Mind & Body*



Adopt mindfulness

Discover how to incorporate mental wellbeing into your routine

Embrace yoga

Improve your body and mind with this ancient practice



Eat well

Is your recipe book looking dull?
We'll provide some inspiration!

Master the gym

Get the most from your sessions,
beat gym anxiety and more